WHEN INTELLECTUALS WERE HEROES
JOSEPH FRANK

HAS BUSH GONE SOFT ON IRAN?
LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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STORY TIME

THE ROAD BACK

How Democrats Can Relearn the Art of Political Narrative

By ROBERT B. REICH

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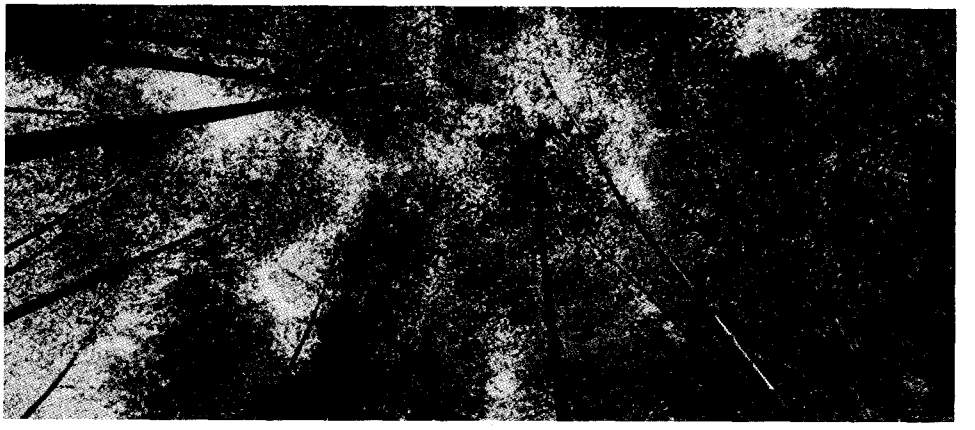

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by the parent company of Kraft Foods, Philip Morris International and Philip Morris USA

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CORRESPONDENCE

WAY WRONG

YOUR EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT, because of the January 30 election, we should stop debating the merits of invading Iraq ("Wrong Way," February 14). I disagree. As heartening as the vote is, it does not change the fact that we invaded because Saddam Hussein supposedly had weapons of mass destruction. When WMD were not found, the rationale for the war morphed into democratizing Iraq. The war is not vital to our national interest, nor does it make us safe from terrorism. This war is costing us over $1 billion per week. With record deficits and George W. Bush's slashing of social programs, we do not have the luxury of throwing away money in Iraq. We cannot stay there until Iraq becomes a democracy. There has to be an exit strategy. It is time for us to go.

REBA SHIMANSKY
New York, New York

GUYS AND DOLLS

STEVEN PINKER SEEMS TO DELIBERately misconstrue the reaction of feminists to Harvard President Lawrence Summers's comments on women in the sciences ("Sex Ed," February 14). Pinker claims, "At some point in the history of the modern women's movement, the belief that men and women are psychologically indistinguishable became sacred." Admittedly, there was a school of thought to this effect in the 1960s; but it was largely a by-product of the behaviorist school of psychology, which held that children could be trained into particular aptitudes and behaviors during their formative years. Because theories of biological determininism had been used as weapons against women for thousands of years, feminists seized on behaviorist ideas to promote the notion that women could achieve in all fields if given the opportunity.

More modern theories of brain development, in concert with recent advances in brain imaging, clearly indicate that there are differences in the way male and female brains work, and this undoubtedly translates into performance differences for certain tasks. Pinker cites some of these in his essay, but are we to assume that the fact that "men are, on average, better at mental rotation and

THE NATURAL PRAGMATISM OF ARIEL SHARON
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TIME TO LEAVE?
THE EDITORS
SPENCER ACKERMAN
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mathematical word problems" is the primary reason most physicists and mathematicians are men? Ask any young woman enrolled in a physics or mathematics program in the United States, and she will say that she feels at least an atmosphere of unfriendliness that is difficult to overcome. I recall giving a seminar in the 1990s that was held in the physics department of a major university. Imagine my surprise when I found that there was no women's restroom in the entire building. Discrimination comes in many—often quite subtle—forms. Fifty years ago, notable scientists and academics argued that biological differences between the sexes contributed to women's failure to achieve in the biological sciences as well. As I look out at my advanced animal physiology class, which is 75 percent female, I wonder at how our brains have evolved so much in such a short period of time.

ALICE C. GIBB
Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Arizona

PINKER HAS INTRODUCED SOME adult supervision into the unruly classroom taught by Summers, that master of malapropisms. But many participants in the debate have overlooked a crucial problem: society's overemphasis on youthful achievement (exemplified by the John Bates Clark Award for economists under 40, which Summers won during his early career). That factor, combined with nature's demand that women concentrate their child-raising responsibilities in their early adult years (mentioned specifically by Pinker in the Harvard context), means that age discrimination may be as much a barrier to women's advancement as sex discrimination. The solution? The original G.I. bill. Veterans like me, who lost half a decade or more out of our civilian work lives, were rewarded with educational and other benefits that helped us make up for those lost years. Women with family responsibilities deserve the same sort of consideration. After their child-raising years, they need educational assistance, especially in fast-moving scientific fields, to regain their place on the tenure track.

WILLIAM M. BURKE
San Francisco, California

PINKER WRITES THAT THE LYTTON and Romney study found "virtually no consistent difference in the way contemporary Americans socialize their sons and daughters." That statement struck this parent and scientist as obviously false—and it is. In fact, that study finds one area of "clearly significant" difference—the "encouragement of sex-typed activities." A career in science is, unfortunately, a strongly sex-typed activity. Scholarship shows that the dominant cause of the paucity of women in scientific careers is not biology; rather, at every stage in their careers, women who are just as capable as their male peers drop out of science in greater numbers. Using male variability to explain the abundance of men

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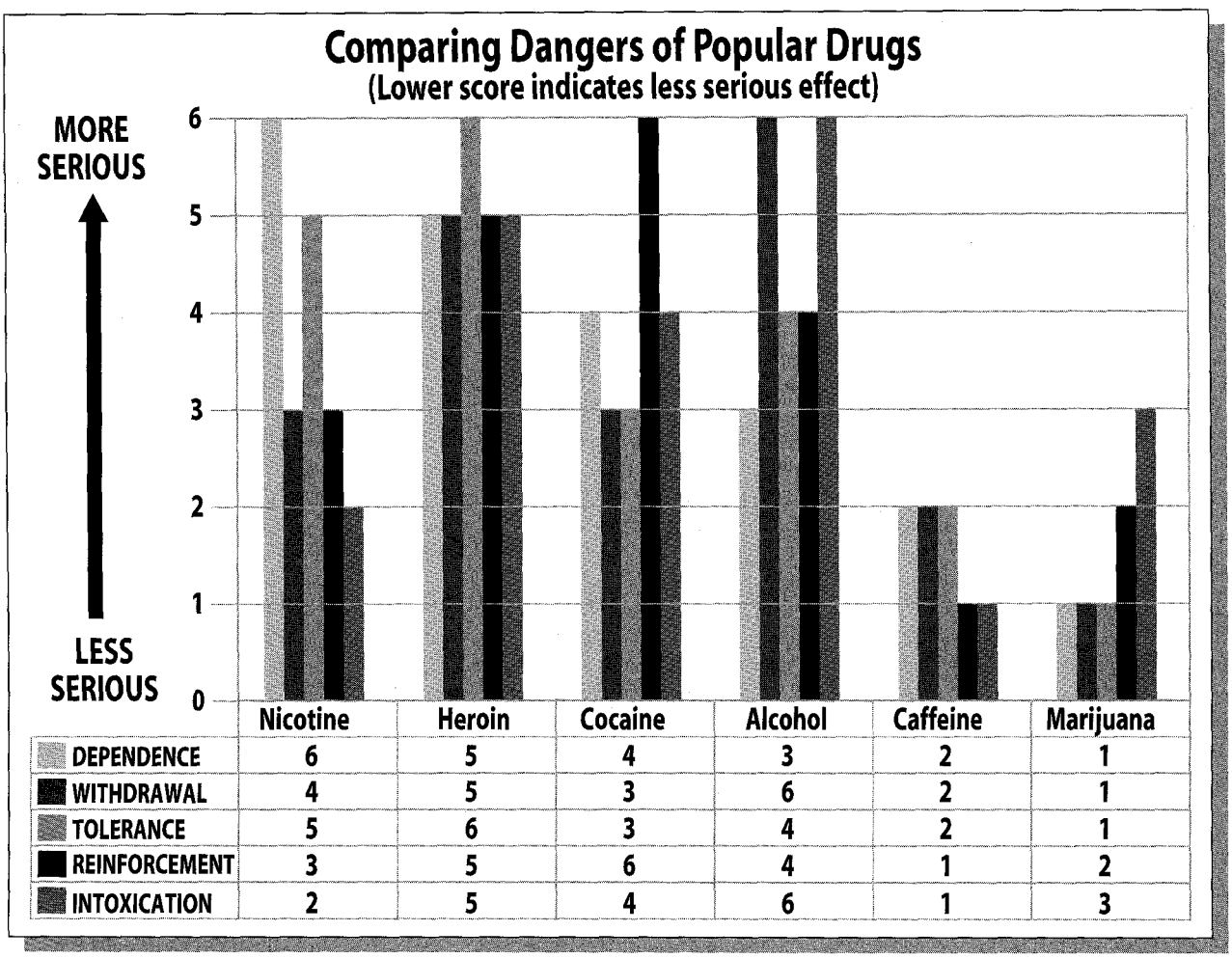
Do Our Drug Laws Focus on the Truly Dangerous Drugs?



	Nicotine	Heroin	Cocaine	Alcohol	Caffeine	Marijuana
DEPENDENCE	6	5	4	3	2	1
WITHDRAWAL	4	5	3	6	2	1
TOLERANCE	5	6	3	4	2	1
REINFORCEMENT	3	5	6	4	1	2
INTOXICATION	2	5	4	6	1	3

Does Jailing Marijuana Users Make More Sense than Jailing Coffee Drinkers?

Dependence: How difficult it is for the the user to quit, the relapse rate, the percentage of people who eventually become dependent, the rating users give their own need for the substance and the degree to which the substance will be used in the face of evidence that it causes harm. **Withdrawal:** Presence and severity of characteristic withdrawal symptoms. **Tolerance:** How much of the substance is needed to satisfy increasing cravings for it, and the level of stable need that is eventually reached. **Reinforcement:** A measure of the substance's ability, in human and animal tests, to get users to take it again and again, and in preference to other substances. **Intoxication:** Though not usually counted as a measure of addiction in itself, the level of intoxication is associated with addiction and increases the personal and social damage a substance may do.

Source: Dr. Jack E. Henningfield, Ph.D. for NIDA. Reported by: Philip J. Hilts, New York Times, Aug. 2, 1994 "Is Nicotine Addictive? It Depends on Whose Criteria You Use."

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Tax Alternative

TRB

FROM ANN ARBOR

ALAN GREENSPAN'S APPEARance before Congress early this month provoked plenty of criticism. And rightly so. The longtime chairman of the Federal Reserve had been asked to comment on the government's failure to control budget deficits and the economic danger those deficits pose. But Greenspan was no innocent bystander to this act of gross fiscal negligence. In 2001, back when the budget was still in surplus, Greenspan urged Congress to enact President Bush's proposed tax cuts; two years later, even after those surpluses were gone, Greenspan endorsed yet another round of Bush tax reductions. Given that the latest projections show the government running budget deficits for the foreseeable future—thanks in no small part to those tax cuts—Greenspan owed Congress an explanation, if not an outright apology. Instead, he just bemoaned how "the brief emergence of surpluses in the late 1990s eroded the will to adhere to" balanced budget rules—as if he had nothing to do with it. Even *Los Angeles Times* columnist Ron Brownstein, perhaps Washington's most congenial pundit, had to ask, "Is he kidding?"

But the most unfortunate part of Greenspan's testimony wasn't what he said about the past. It was what he said about the future. As discussion turned to the retirement of the baby-boomer generation and the financial strain they will place on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, Greenspan urged Congress to take preemptive action by cutting those entitlement programs down to size. "I fear that we may have already committed more physical resources to the baby-boom generation in its retirement years than our economy has the capacity to deliver," Greenspan explained. The government's goal, he said, should be to "close the fiscal gap primarily, if not wholly, from the outlay side"—in other words, by drastically reducing the money those programs spend on their beneficiaries.

Nobody seemed to find this part of the testimony particularly controversial—perhaps because, around Washington, it's not controversial to insist that preparing for the baby-boom generation should consist largely of reductions of the entitlement programs on which they will rely. But, unless Republicans have somehow managed to repeal the laws of mathematics (hey, you never know, they're pretty resourceful), there's another way to balance the federal government's books. Rather than concentrate primarily on reducing the money we take from the federal treasury, we could try putting more money into it. In other words, we could actually *raise taxes*.

Although it is politically taboo today, there was a time when government didn't flinch from raising taxes, just so long as there was a legitimate need to finance new spending. This would seem to be just such an occasion, thanks to three increasingly urgent claims on federal money: protecting Americans from terrorists, providing the aging population with retirement benefits, and patching up (or replacing) the employer-based health insurance system. These are all vital public needs that only the government is in a position to meet, either because they require collective, coordinated action (like maintaining an army) or because they provide a service that the free market won't (like giving the elderly health insurance). Clearly, modest reductions in some programs or services should be part of any long-term budget strategy. But, overall, there's a compelling case for the government spending a great deal more money than it does now. And, while a robust economy can increase tax receipts all by itself, raising more revenue would inevitably involve raising at least some tax rates.

One reason this option doesn't get the attention it deserves is that most of the Washington establishment thinks it would, as Greenspan put it, "pose significant risks to economic growth." It's certainly true that, if taxes become too high, they can slow an economy by, among other things, reducing incentives to work or interfering with the market's ability to allocate goods and services efficiently. But the United States is far from that point. Thanks to the Bush tax cuts, our relative tax burden is far lower than it was in 2000. In fact, it hasn't been this low in half a century. Simply repealing the Bush tax cuts would cover the long-term shortfall in Social Security while leaving some extra money for other purposes. And, far from imperiling the economy, it would merely restore tax rates to what they were late in the Clinton era, a time when the economy was doing extraordinarily well.

Taxes would probably have to go higher still in order to finance major new spending on homeland security *and* sustain relatively generous retirement benefits *and* cover vast expansions of government-provided health insurance. But there may be room for some of that, too. The relative U.S. tax burden—measured, again, as a percentage of the overall economy—is the lowest in the developed world. And, while high taxes in Europe have sometimes choked economies there, there is an enormous middle ground between the United States, where taxes are 25 percent of gross domestic product, and Sweden, where taxes are 50 percent of gross domestic product. (Besides, Sweden's economy has actually been performing pretty well lately.)

Most voters would undoubtedly prefer lower taxes and higher benefits, a fantasy the Republican majority has indulged by passing huge tax cuts without offsetting spending cuts. But, sooner or later, the voters will have to confront real tradeoffs, if only because the financial markets won't let excessive deficits continue forever. And the early signs suggest that Americans might be more hospitable to tax increases than everybody has long assumed. Skittishness over benefit cuts obviously has a lot to do with the sinking support for Bush's Social Security privatization plan; among the options for improving Social Security's finances, by far the most popular solution is raising the limit on taxable income. And, as a recent *Washington Monthly* article by Daniel Franklin and A.G. Newmyer III points out, even Republican governors like former Bush administration budget director Mitch Daniels (now the governor of Indiana) have recently backed tax increases for their states in order to avoid cuts in services. Greenspan would surely argue that raising taxes in this way invites economic calamity. But, given the maestro's recent track record, maybe that means it's the right idea. **JONATHAN COHN**

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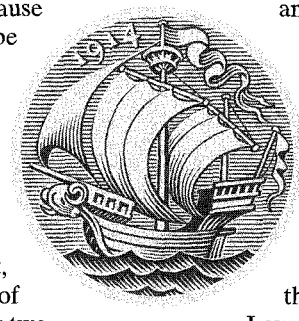
Ethical Dilemma

CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS MUST have short memories. How else does one explain their unwavering support of House Majority Leader Tom DeLay? After all, it was only a decade ago that Republicans rode to power in the House of Representatives on the back of a clean-government movement. Today, they jeopardize that majority by defending the very sort of corruption they once railed against.

After the House Ethics Committee issued a remarkable three admonitions to the Texas representative in the past year for a range of misdeeds—from offering a political favor to a lawmaker in exchange for a vote, to improperly asking federal aviation officials to track a plane involved in a Texas political dispute, to conduct suggesting that political contributions might influence legislative action—the Republican leadership chose to punish not DeLay but the Ethics Committee. First, in January, the GOP leadership changed the Committee's rules: Where it once required a vote of just five members (the Committee is composed of five Democrats and five Republicans) to launch an investigation, now a majority is required. Then, just to make sure that the Committee's Republicans wouldn't side with any Democrats to create such a majority, the GOP leadership replaced the Committee's three most independent-minded Republicans, including its chairman, with members deemed more loyal to the party. (Indeed, two of the new Republican Ethics Committee members have donated to DeLay's legal defense fund.)

And the GOP's support for DeLay is not just procedural; it's rhetorical as well. Although there has been some anonymous carping about DeLay from Republican aides and lobbyists, no prominent Republican has gone on the record to criticize the majority leader. Just the opposite: Prominent Republicans have reacted to every DeLay scandal by repeatedly singing his praises. This week, for instance, after DeLay became embroiled in another ethics flap—this one involving a trip to South Korea that was paid for, in apparent violation of House rules, by a group registered as a foreign agent—House Majority Whip Roy Blunt reassured *The Washington Post* that DeLay "has always had, and continues to have, the strong support" of the GOP.

It is tempting to hope that Republicans continue in this blind support for their leader, because doing so would seem to be an almost certain route to losing their House majority. To see why, one need only recall how the Democrats lost theirs.



It was 16 years ago this May that Jim Wright, the Democratic speaker of the House, resigned after two years of unremitting ethical scandals. And, while Wright's transgressions—most of which involved an unseemly book deal that netted him about $50,000—were relatively small, especially compared with some of DeLay's, House Democrats paid a price for the two years they doggedly defended their speaker. As Michael Crowley recently documented in these pages ("Learning from Newt," January 24), House Republicans, especially a young tyro named Newt Gingrich, argued that Wright's disgrace—and the Democrats' initial efforts to defend him—were symptomatic of an institutional corruption that pervaded all of Congress. They were able to convince voters that the only way to save the House from this endemic corruption was to get rid of its Democratic majority. Which voters of course did in 1994.

The current Republican House majority now finds itself in very similar circumstances. Although they have been in the majority only ten years—as opposed to the 40 years the Democrats ruled the House before being swept out in 1994—House Republicans have become just as entrenched and arrogant as Democrats were before their downfall. And their steadfast defense of DeLay and his ethical transgressions is simply the most prominent manifestation of that. If they continue in this defense, it will only be a matter of time before House Democrats, taking a page from Gingrich's old playbook, will successfully use DeLay to cast the entire Republican majority as corrupt—and in need of replacing.

Such a development would hardly be unwelcome in these quarters. At the same time, however, it's a shame that the majority party refuses to govern in an ethical manner. House Republicans should cease their all-out defense of DeLay and let him face the consequences of his actions—much as Senate Republicans refused to stand by their majority leader, Trent Lott, in 2002 after his indefensible comments about Strom Thurmond and segregation. If, in doing so, Republicans make it more difficult for Democrats to retake the House, at least they will have also made Congress more honest. ■

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NOTEBOOK

BUSH CRONY, IMAGE MAKER . . . PAT ROBERTS, PROMISE BREAKER

AMBASSADOR TO THE WORLD

THE UNITED STATES MAY BE HAVING its share of foreign tussles, but, as luck would have it, we have a new undersecretary of state for public diplomacy on the way. Soon, inflamed inhabitants of foreign lands will enjoy a soothing balm administered by the effortlessly charming Karen Hughes.

To be sure, improving the image of the United States will be a difficult job. And Hughes's qualifications—getting a minority of American voters to prefer George W. Bush over Al Gore—don't immediately suggest a knack for reaching the hearts of ululating Syrians. On the other hand, Hughes has the advantage of getting to build, as it were, from the ground up. According to one 2004 Zogby survey, for example, 98 percent of Egyptians held an unfavorable opinion of the United States. Hughes might succeed in losing the remaining contrarian 2 percent, but, at this point—big deal. It's not a steep drop.

We hope, however, that Hughes will learn a bit from her immediate predecessors, who bequeathed—to borrow an exquisite understatement from *The Christian Science Monitor*—"limited records of accomplishment." Predecessor Charlotte Beers put together a few TV ads emphasizing that Muslim citizens in the United States were respected and loved—a message akin to being told that, though the Lexus barreling toward you may run you over, at least its passengers enjoy heated leather seats. TV outlets in Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan said no thanks to the ad. Then came Margaret Tutwiler, who lasted a shorter span. "I love government and public service," Tutwiler explained after four and a half heady months, "but I needed to stick to my plan." The plan being, presumably, to run the hell away.

Many people assumed that Beers and Tutwiler were capable souls hamstrung by the real-world behavior of the Bush administration. But maybe *they* were the ones undermining *Bush*—obscuring his innate attractiveness to the Muslim world with poor advertising. After all, Beers and Tutwiler weren't Bush loyalists. Hughes, on the other hand, does not share this problem—at least if reports containing terms like "fanatical" and "Vulcan mind meld" are any sign. So perhaps now the real Bush can be revealed. And, with any luck, Damascus will love it.

Karen Hughes

POISON IVY

LAWRENCE SUMMERS'S CRITICS HAVE denounced him as a bully, but it is increasingly obvious who the bully at Harvard is. On March 15, by a vote of 218 to 185, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, a body whose 802 voting members comprise less than half of the university's nonmedical faculty, adopted a resolution: "The faculty lacks confidence in the leadership of Lawrence H. Summers." That is the entirety of the damning text. It made no arguments, cited no reasons, offered no ideas. About the substance of the controversy, the sentence of condemnation was wholly inarticulate, except in its intention to intimidate. No intelligence leavened its righteous anger. Shut up, they explained.

Part of the explanation for Summers's tribulations is blatantly ideological: He has dissented from certain dogmas of the left, and such impudence must never go unpunished. Summers's critics have bizarrely portrayed him as some sort of John Silber upriver, when in fact his lifetime of scholarly work and policy work shows him to be a fine liberal; but there is no remedy there, since the academic left regards everything to its right as one and the same.

But the melodrama at Harvard is also about the fear of change, and of the personal force that change requires. (The critics' euphemism for personal force is "management style.") Whatever the proper analysis of the representation of women in mathematics and the sciences, Harvard is facing some very urgent problems, and Summers is proposing solutions. Summers's plans for Harvard—for its physical growth, for the reform of its curriculum, for the expansion of its commitment to the sciences—are grand. They were bound to rattle a university that had become accustomed to a clubbable complacence at the top. But Summers is not Harvard's host, he is its president; and it is the duty of Harvard's president to think boldly and even brusquely (but always with reasoned deliberation) about the future of the institution in an increasingly dizzying age. The faculty's slap was designed to break the force of the president's vision by damaging his authority. And no sooner had it passed than one of its supporters, a professor of sociology, plangently admitted, "I felt sorry for Larry." How exquisite. The important thing, you see, is that,

DAVID COWLES

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whatever happens, these people feel good about themselves.

SELECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

To Pat Roberts, the Kansas Republican who heads the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the controversy over the failure of prewar intelligence about Iraq is behind us. After all, last July his committee released a 511-page report documenting how the intelligence community came erroneously to believe that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. And one of Roberts's chief achievements was securing the Committee's unanimous endorsement of the report—even though Committee Democrats wrote that it "paints an incomplete picture" by not addressing the question of how the Bush administration presented qualified or internally disputed intelligence to the public to sell the war. Roberts got those Democrats on board by, as he told *The New York Times* shortly after the report's release, promising to reserve questions about the administration's use of intelligence for a second report, to be delivered after the November election.

It now appears Roberts doesn't intend to keep his word. In remarks last week at the Woodrow Wilson Center, he said the long-awaited phase-two report is "basically on the back burner," indefinitely postponed while the Committee turns its attention to overseeing intelligence reform. Which suits Roberts fine: As he put it, "The bottom line is that [the administration] believed the intelligence, and the intelligence was wrong." Except that's not really the bottom line. Former CIA Director George Tenet claims he warned the administration that its public statements about Iraqi WMD were not always supported by the available intelligence, telling the Armed Services Committee in February 2004, "When I believed that somebody was misconstruing intelligence, I said something about it." What about when somebody misconstrues intelligence oversight? ■

TNR.commentary

IRAQ'D

SPENCER ACKERMAN

SPANISH BOMBS: In commemoration of the anniversary of 3/11—when an Al Qaeda affiliate murdered nearly 200 people in a Madrid train station—the Islamic Commission of Spain has issued a fatwa against Osama bin Laden. The Iraqi government—and every government, nongovernmental organization, think tank, civil society organization, and individual on the planet, for that matter—should circulate the fatwa as widely as possible. The Iraqi terrorists (most likely foreign Salafists), with names like the Soldiers of the Prophet's Companions, claim to speak for besieged (Sunni) Muslims while they murder other (Shia) Muslims and American troops. It hasn't won them much goodwill: As Robert F. Worth reports in *The New York Times*, Al Qaeda in Iraq considers it necessary to state in its online magazine that it doesn't "spill a drop of Muslim blood unless it is justified."

Yet the Salafists still maintain some unknown amount of support among Iraqi Sunnis. The Spanish fatwa, issued by Sunni clerics, stands an excellent chance of eroding that support considerably. Don't take my word for it. As soon as the Islamic Commission of Spain issued its edict, Al Qaeda in Iraq defensively denounced its authors as "infidels" themselves. Abu Musab Al Zarqawi and his cohorts evidently know that they can't possibly maintain support among Iraqis if they're viewed as religiously forbidden. The Iraqi government should blanket the airwaves with the Spanish fatwa until Iraqis can recite it by heart.

THE KIRKUK BANK SHOT?: I've been puzzling for days over what exactly the Kurds were trying to accomplish by setting their price for joining a United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) coalition government so high, given that the outcome has never exactly been in doubt. In particular, it's curious why the Kurds decided to press the Shia on the intractable issue of Kirkuk immediately: Sure, the Kurds consider Kirkuk their primary objective, but their control of Tamim Province positions them extremely well to control Kirkuk no matter what the Shia agree to in March 2005.

A comment from Adnan Ali, an adviser to the UIA's Ibrahim Jaafari, goes a long way toward answering the question: "We all agree that the TAL [Transitional Administrative Law] is the constitution for this government." Digging their heels in on Kirkuk at the outset may have been a bank shot for getting the Shia to accept the TAL, which Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani has sharply rejected in the past and the Shia have flirted with scrapping. As Ali said, "The TAL in article 58 says what to do on Kirkuk"—namely, defer final-status arbitration until after the adoption of a permanent constitution, when a commission can determine proper residency for displaced persons (read: Kurds) and a census is held, after which Tamim Province can vote on whether it would like to be part of Kurdistan. And the TAL also provides for the three-province veto, whereby the Kurds can effectively reject the permanent constitution if it suits them—something Sistani has long opposed.

By demanding resolution of Kirkuk now—a headache the UIA neither wanted nor needed—the Kurds basically maneuvered the Shia toward a fallback position extremely favorable to Kurdistan. Abrogating the TAL will now bring down the next government, though the Kurds may be amenable to compromises on other TAL measures unpalatable to the Shia. For the Shia, the big question now is what their acceptance of the TAL's Kirkuk process will mean for their attempts to bring the Sunnis into the government. There's a long and treacherous road to travel before Kirkuk's final status is decided, of course. But the Kurds have seen to it that they've got the high ground.

&c.

NOAM SCHEIBER

SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION = LEAD WEIGHT: I argued a few weeks ago that Social Security privatization could be even more devastating for congressional Republicans than most Democrats think ("Risk Tolerance," March 7). On March 14, Gallup released some polling data suggesting congressional Republicans may be taking a pretty serious hit already:

> According to the poll, 37 percent of Americans approve, but 53 percent disapprove, of the way Congress is handling its job. Last month, the comparable figures were 45 percent approve to 48 percent disapprove. The current figures are the lowest that Gallup has measured since September 1999. . . .

For those keeping score, that's a net 13-point swing in the wrong direction in the last month. But, hey, we're only two weeks into the White House's 60-day Social Security push. There's still plenty of time for that number to drop a lot further.

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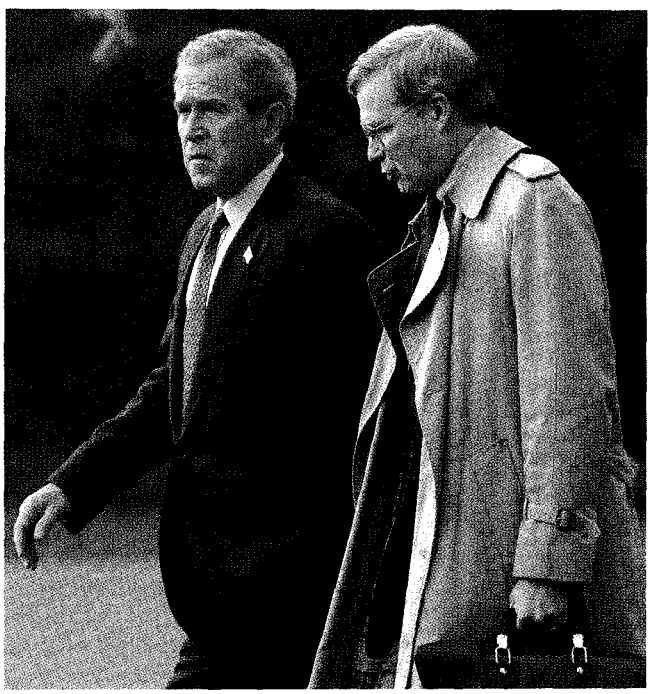
Bush's new Iran policy.

Tehran Twist

BY LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN



National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley thinks the incentives President Bush has offered Iran could end its nuclear program—but many in the administration disagree.

NOT SINCE REYKJAVIK—the 1986 summit at which Ronald Reagan emerged from his meeting with Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev sounding like, well, Mikhail Gorbachev—has an American president turned so quickly on a dime. But there was President Bush on the final leg of his trip to Europe three weeks ago, emerging from meetings with French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Jettisoning the administration's long-standing and vocal contempt for European efforts to cut a deal with Iran over its nuclear program, Bush announced that, when it came to the Islamic Republic, the United States and Europe were now "on the same page." National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said that, while Bush's trip heralded a new "convergence" with Europe, it still left open the question of "who should the carrots come from and what should they be."

As it turns out, the carrots will come from an administration whose own secretary of state was portraying Europe's Iran strategy as a toothless enterprise only two weeks before the president declared otherwise. Reversing course, Condoleezza Rice announced last week that the administration would join the European Union in offering Iran incentives—aircraft parts and membership in the World Trade Organization—in exchange for halting its drive to build a nuclear bomb. Why the sudden about-face? On a foreign policy team where ideas typically bubble up to the surface, and where debates over seemingly trivial topics rage for months at the Cabinet level, this one comes from the president himself.

In fact, because the initiative did come from Bush—or, more exactly, his European interlocutors—it was subject to less of the bureaucratic wrangling that has been this foreign policy team's signature. Before most administration officials had a chance even to come up with an opinion, the proposal had already been enshrined as official policy. Hence members of the Bush team have been lending their own Rashomon-like interpretations to a policy that is, if nothing else, wide open to interpretation.

WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION, Hadley leads a camp of true believers, making a case for the European initiative that puts him at odds with more skeptical members of the Bush team. "Hadley argues that, given the right incentives, Iran just might bend to the Europeans," says an official involved in the deliberations. So, too, according to their colleagues, do Undersecretary for Political Affairs William Burns, a proponent of engaging Iran when he was chief of the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs; members of the Nonproliferation and Near Eastern bureaus; and other NSC staffers.

The argument that Iran may agree to a deal is dismissed by one administration hawk as "fantasy." But the optimistic interpretation hasn't been spun out of whole cloth. As former National Security Adviser (and Hadley confidante) Brent Scowcroft put it in a *Financial Times* op-ed last week, "Tehran's actions suggest it is not indifferent to the threat of being hauled before the United Nations Security Council, or to the economic benefits from trade agreements with Europe and accession to the World Trade Organization." In this telling, Iran—unlike, say, North Korea—desperately wants to avoid being cast as a pariah on the international stage. As evidence for this proposition, supporters of the deal point to, among other things, the fact that the Europeans were able to persuade Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment in 2003 and to enter into the current round of negotiations last November.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and their hard-line aides mounted a campaign to scuttle the administration's embrace of the European position, beginning with a principals' meeting the day after the president's return from Europe and continuing until the moment the initiative was unveiled last Friday. Their opposition derives from more than bureaucratic pique. They don't trust the Europeans to be firm with Iran, and they don't trust Iran, period. Cheney,

RON EDMONDS/AP PHOTO

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in particular, resisted to the end, arguing that, if negotiations collapse, the Europeans cannot not be counted on to support a tougher U.S. stance. "What you could have is another Iraq scenario," explains one Defense Department official, "where we involve the Europeans only to have them come back and ask for more time and more concessions." Better, opponents of the European position argued, to continue with what has amounted to administration policy for the past two years: pressing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council, where, they hope, it will be singled out for international opprobrium and possible sanctions.

Ultimately, Cheney and the Pentagon backed down but demanded two crucial conditions. First, Cheney insisted late last week that the Europeans agree, in writing, that they will support the United States hauling Iran before the Security Council if negotiations fail. Which the Europeans did: A document drafted by the European Union last week pledges, "We shall have no choice but to support referring Iran's nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council" if Tehran rejects a permanent halt to its uranium-enrichment program. Second, according to officials, administration hawks have insisted on a timeline for Europe's talks, with a drop-dead date probably arriving in the fall, a few months after Iran's election this summer.

There is a third, and ultimately dominant, position in the administration: the cynical one. Its adherents split the difference between Hadley's and Cheney's arguments—they want to offer Iran incentives, but under the assumption they will likely be refused. Europe, not Iran, is the audience here. "The point," says a senior administration official, "is, when diplomacy fails, we can say to the Europeans, 'Hey, we tried.'" Rice, Deputy National Security Adviser Elliott Abrams, and Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, who worked out the final details with the Europeans last week, are the main engines of this compromise. But the logic comes mostly from the president himself, who has been assured by British Prime Minister Tony Blair that, if the United States backs the Europeans now, Europe will back the United States if the negotiations run into a brick wall. Administration officials claim that the British and French suspect the Iranians will not, in the end, cooperate. Once the Europeans know this for a fact, the argument goes, they will follow Washington's lead and refer the Iranians to the Security Council—where hard-line U.N. Ambassador John Bolton will, if he is confirmed, be waiting for them. In the meantime, however, the administration has resisted moves—such as a reference to democratizing Iran, subsequently deleted from Rice's announcement of the new U.S. policy—that could upset continental sensibilities.

FOR ALL THEIR differences, each camp's strategy has one thing in common: It is unlikely to work. For the true believers, the ink had barely dried on last week's agreement when Iranian negotiator Cyrus Naseri dismissed it as "really not something so significant that we could even discuss it as a trade-off for anything at all." Underscoring the point, deliberations over the U.S.-European initiative were interrupted by the IAEA's finding that Iran had blocked inspectors from a military and possible nuclear facility, was continuing apace with its efforts to build a heavy-water reactor, and was busy digging an underground tunnel system. "Regardless of what the Europeans do or don't do," says Ray Takeyh, an Iran scholar at the Council on Foreign Relations, "the Iranians will pursue a nuclear program so long as they believe it's in their interest."

For their part, the hawks must contend with the certainty that, absent European support, the IAEA—where the Iranian representative feels sufficiently unthreatened that he goes to sleep when American officials speak, and where IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei spent much of the past two years shouting at Bolton, who led the U.S. delegation—will never refer Iran to the Security Council. As for the cynics who recognize the tactical importance of European support, they may find that European backing is not forthcoming. To begin with, it's unclear whether the Europeans actually find themselves on "the same page" as Bush. The Germans, for one, remain wedded to the negotiating process, and there may not be sufficient evidence to budge their attachment, says a senior official—or anyone else's, for that matter. When Russia announced, immediately after Bush's trip, that it would supply nuclear fuel to Iran—a move the administration had been lobbying for years to forestall—European Commission external relations spokeswoman Emma Udwin painted the deadly shipment as "compatible with our own approach." Moreover, even if the Europeans were to back a referral to the Security Council, says David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, "going to the U.N. would only be the beginning of a strategy, and there you have the problem of Russia and China." Administration officials repeat the mantra that China has never vetoed a resolution unrelated to China and insist that Russia won't block sanctions. But neither Moscow (itself the principal sponsor of Iran's nuclear program) nor Beijing (which signed a $70 billion deal to purchase natural gas from Iran last October) has any reason to punish its client.

Nor does the administration seem to have a clear idea of what the point of the whole enterprise is meant to be, other than to insist it's not military action. Hence the problem with today's sideshow: American and European officials insist that Iran must never have the bomb, and yet, absent a willingness to match words with deeds on either side of the Atlantic, it clearly will. As the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center's Henry Sokolski, who has studied Iran's nuclear program extensively, puts it, "No other major gaps remain: Iran has the requisite equipment to make the weapons fuel, the know-how to assemble the bombs, and the missile and naval systems necessary to deliver them beyond its borders." At this rate, rather than debating what to do about an Iran that wants to go nuclear, the Bush team and its European counterparts may soon be debating what to do about an Iran that just did. ■

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On the Hill

Border War

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

FOR MOST WASHINGTON Republicans, a berating from Karl Rove is the stuff of nightmares. For Tom Tancredo, it was the best thing that ever happened to him. One morning in April 2002, the representative from Colorado was driving to work when his cell phone rang. It was Rove calling from the White House. The president's fabled strategist had just finished reading a *Washington Times* article in which Tancredo, whose political obsession is to limit both legal and illegal immigration into this country, had warned the Bush administration to treat border control more seriously. As usual, Tancredo had delivered his point in cunningly theatrical terms. "Unless we do something significant to control our borders, we're going to have another event with someone waltzing across the borders. Then the blood of the people killed will be on this administration and this Congress." The quote sent Rove into a hollering rage—"he was absolutely screaming," Tancredo says—that forced the representative to pull off the road for safety. Among other things, Tancredo says, Rove called him a "traitor," and, with an impressive literary flourish, warned him "never again to darken the doorstep of the White House."

A typical Republican would maintain a shamed silence about such an episode. Tancredo immediately began sharing it with anyone who would listen. He has since recounted the tale of Rove's call to a long list of newspapers, magazines, TV shows, and speaking audiences, including everyone from *The Dallas Morning News* to *Newsweek*; from *Roll Call* to MSNBC. Front and center on Tancredo's website is a December Fox News clip in which he speaks proudly of the White House's dislike for him. "[Rove]'s chewed out everyone in this building," Tancredo tells me with a smile. "The other people just don't talk about it."

Tancredo understands that talking about it is not an embarrassment. It's an opportunity—a chance to focus attention on his pet issue. Tancredo, who represents conservative suburbs of Denver, is turning himself into the avatar of a resurgent anti-immigration wing of the Republican Party. Just as President Bush is working to soften the party's image on immigration and lift its standing among Latino voters, Tancredo and his allies are demanding American troops at the Mexican border and severe restrictions on *legal* immigration—while warning of a looming threat to "Western civilization" itself.

For Republicans like Tancredo, controlling immigration has become a fixation, one matched perhaps only by the zealotry of GOP tax-cutters like Grover Norquist. And, if that obsession leads to bitter fights with the president, so be it. Sitting in an armchair in a meeting room near the House floor recently, Tancredo—who, in person, exudes an almost preternatural calm—explained his strategy. "If you want some attention in this town," he says, "take on the president [of] your own party. All of a sudden, when I did it, I was on Fox [constantly]. They must have looked at the weekly schedule and said, 'A minute here, three minutes there, let's get Tancredo. He'll say something outrageous.' " He breaks into a wide smile. "And I try!"

Outrageousness seems to come effortlessly. When *The Denver Post* profiled an illegal immigrant high school student with a 3.9 grade point average, Tancredo tried to have the boy deported. During his reelection race last fall, he aired campaign ads that included images of devastation from the Beslan school massacre in Russia and in which he declared, "Am I supposed to ignore the possibility of something like this happening here? Not on your life!" In one recent speech to activists in Washington, D.C., Tancredo averred that the Chinese government is "trying to export people" as a "way of extending their hegemony."

This would be just a story about a rabidly self-promotional representative were it not for the signs that Tancredo is helping to whip up a new xenophobia on the GOP right, with both short-term and long-term implications. In the near term, Tancredo's crusade threatens to block the sweeping immigration reform that is one of Bush's biggest second-term initiatives. At the same time, he's already looking past this lame-duck president and toward the 2008 presidential campaign. Having recently visited New Hampshire—and with plans to tour Iowa this spring—Tancredo is determined to make his laments about "the cult of multiculturalism" a central issue in the 2008 Republican primaries, even if it means a quixotic single-issue candidacy of his own. If he succeeds, Tancredo could set back by decades Rove's dream of a pro-GOP Latino America. Just when Republicans thought they had exorcised the ghost of Pat Buchanan, he's back. And he knows all the cable bookers in town.

OF ALL THE fault lines in today's GOP, few of them are as intense as the party's split over immigration. "No issue, not one, threatens to do more damage to the Republican coalition than immigration," wrote *National Review*'s David Frum late last year. An issue that seemed of third-tier importance gained new resonance after the September 11 attacks put a fresh national security spin on old conservative arguments. Since the attacks, the House Immigration Reform Caucus, which Tancredo chairs, has jumped from 16 members to 72. Meanwhile, a sputtering economy appears to be fueling resentment toward low-wage immigrant workers. A November 2003 Pew poll found that 54 percent of Republicans agree "completely" that immigration needs to be tightened—a 16 percent spike over five years. (By January 2005, 77 percent of respondents in an ABC News poll said they wanted to see tougher measures to keep immigrants out of the country.)

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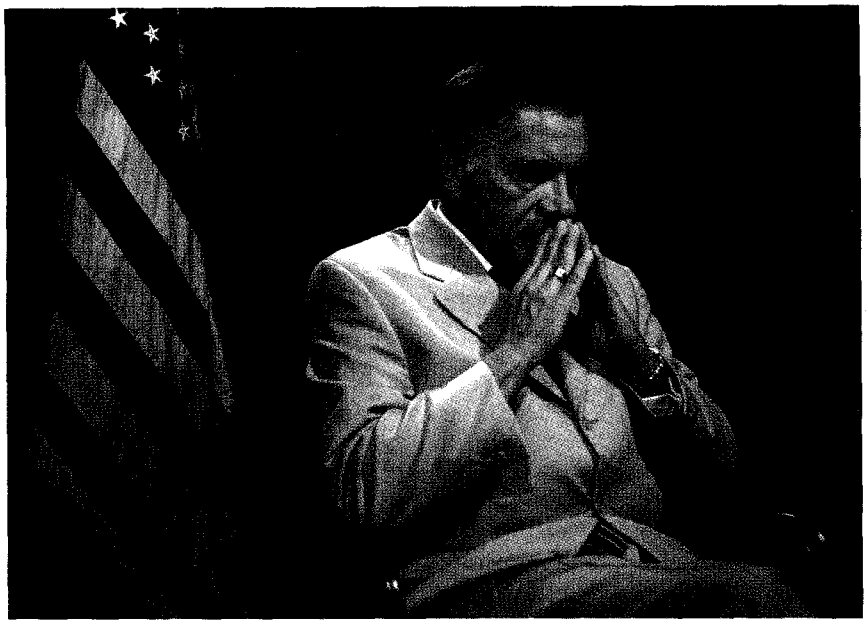

Tom Tancredo thinks immigration threatens Western civilization. His detractors think Tancredo threatens the GOP.

Last year, the Republicans in Tancredo's caucus nearly managed to derail an intelligence reform bill with strong White House backing, risking severe embarrassment to the president. Bush briefly placated the anti-immigrant conservatives with promises of new border-enforcement measures. But now they're even madder. Bush's latest budget plan provides funding for just 210 of the 2,000 new border-patrol agents authorized in the intelligence reform bill, and Republicans have watched with disgust as Democrats have used the issue to bash the president. Particularly in light of recent intelligence reports that Al Qaeda considers the Mexican border a prime entry point into the United States, "[Bush] is setting up the administration to be attacked by Democrats as not being serious on immigration and homeland security," says Dan Stein, executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform. Stein was appalled that, at an immigration subcommittee hearing, liberal Democrats "Maxine Waters, Loretta Sanchez, and Sheila Jackson Lee were all pounding away, sounding like they were laying the groundwork to nail the next major terror incident at the president's feet."

Fueled by such frustrations, Tancredo's immigration caucus is now gearing up for another big battle. House Republicans recently passed several provisions they weren't able to add to the intelligence reform bill—including ones making it harder for would-be immigrants to receive asylum and nearly impossible for illegal ones to obtain driver's licenses. Earlier this week, they attached the legislation to an Iraq war spending bill that the Senate—which is far more moderate on immigration issues—will be forced to consider.

That's not how the Senate or the White House wants things to play out. Bush and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist are hoping to avoid a fight over the House's tough provisions, which have a punitive air, until they are ready to offer a more comprehensive reform plan based on Bush's guest worker proposal, which the White House likes to describe with phrases like "humane" and "compassionate." (Expect to hear more of that rhetoric when Bush meets with Mexican President Vicente Fox next week.) Bush's plan, which is strongly backed by a business community in need of cheap manual labor, would grant illegal immigrants a work permit lasting up to three years before they had to return home. But conservatives suspect Bush's plan is a Trojan horse that will lead to amnesty for millions of illegal immigrants. "[Bush] has said it's not a pass to a green card," says Steven Camarota of the conservative Center for Immigration Studies. "If he does that, talk-show hosts are going to tear him a new butt."

And so will Tom Tancredo. On his side is a sense of populist righteousness, which holds that only elite Washington opinion is blocking the sweeping immigration crackdown that the United States is waiting for. "On immigration, there's a fundamental divide in America," says Camarota. "It's not a left-right divide. It's a divide between public opinion and elite opinion."

Tancredo says that divide could be seen during Arizona's recent Proposition 200 initiative, which bars illegal aliens from public services like schools and health care. "The opposition to it was the entire political establishment in Arizona. Both parties, all members of Congress, the two senators, the governor, the papers. The proponents were outspent two-and-a-half to one by the opponents. And it passed." What's more, he adds with pride, "It passed with 47 percent of Hispanic votes."

Arizona, Tancredo contends, is representative of a similar disconnect on the national level between elite and public opinion on immigration. Just as important, perhaps, Tancredo says Arizona put the lie to the notion that Latinos will flee the Republican Party if it stands for tighter border control. The GOP still has bad memories of the fallout from California's 1994 Proposition 187 referendum, which denied illegal aliens government benefits and provoked a backlash among Latinos. To the extent it provides a counterexample to Proposition 187, Tancredo says, the Arizona vote was "absolutely seminal."

ALTHOUGH HE'S A popular figure among Republican House colleagues who appreciate his immigration crusade, Tancredo isn't exactly beloved on Capitol Hill. During the 2004 election, a political action committee he founded, Team America (which is chaired by Pat Buchanan's sister, Bay) funded primary

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opponents running against two of his pro-immigration GOP colleagues, Arizona's Jim Kolbe and Utah's Chris Cannon. Such fratricidal tactics are verboten within the GOP ranks, and bringing the subject up leads him to brag about another fierce dressing-down from another highly feared Republican. "Ooh, doggies!" he says. "[Tom] DeLay called me in and said, 'You're finished, kaput. You cannot think of making a career in this place!' " As with his Rove encounter, Tancredo seems to wear this as a badge of honor. "I'll never get a committee chair, I'll never be a subcommittee chairman, whip team member, cheering squad, I don't know, whatever the hell. I will never be any of those things."

But Tancredo clearly cares less about career advancement in the House than the advancement of his ideas. And that's not likely to be good news for the GOP. Politics is as much about atmospherics as policy. And, in that sense, GOP conservatives may not want Tom Tancredo to be their public face on immigration. A former schoolteacher and one-time head of a libertarian think tank in Golden, Colorado, Tancredo is prone to wandering away from the nuts-and-bolts questions of wages and border security into more abstract, and more politically perilous, theorizing.

"There's a broader and long-term goal here," Tancredo explains. It emerges that he is a disciple of Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington, who believes that the world is divided into competing civilizations and that the character of the United States is threatened by Latino immigration. "It's the Samuel Huntington perspective. Who are we? That's something we need to work on. America is wrestling with an identity crisis. Part of it is a result of what I call the 'cult of multiculturalism.' The idea that there is nothing—nothing—of value in Western civilization, that we have nothing to offer the world, that we have nothing to offer as a viable society, that everything we have is bad and ugly." He continues, "If we are truly in a clash of civilizations, if Samuel Huntington's right about that, which I happen to believe, then it is important for us to understand who we are. What does it mean to be part of Western civilization? Are there inherent values that are worth anyone's allegiance?" Though delivered with a softer edge, this sounds a lot like the Buchananite rhetoric that caused immense harm to the GOP's national image in the 1990s.

It seems more than possible that Tom Tancredo is headed into the same political trap. "You can get an awful lot of mileage from demagoguing this issue, because it gets you on TV a lot," says Cecilia Muñoz of the liberal Hispanic group National Council of La Raza. "It may be good for short-term political gain, but, in the long term, it's likely to be a disaster for the Republican Party. It's pretty hard to woo the Latino community if you're taking an anti-immigrant posture—especially an ugly one."

Not that Democrats mind. As the GOP fights itself, Democrats are staking out both the left and right flanks. Ted Kennedy is drafting his own guest-worker bill, even as Hillary Clinton stuns conservatives by declaring her "adamant" opposition to illegal immigration.

None of this seems to trouble Tancredo, who has plans to visit the 2008 primary battlegrounds of Iowa and South Carolina in the weeks ahead with a posse of reporters in tow. "I'd like to get a national debate on this," he says. But such a debate comes with personal as well as political risks. During his interview with me, Tancredo's press aide, Carlos Espinosa ("yes, a Latino—he makes me look tame as hell on this issue," Tancredo cracks) interrupts. He says the Capitol Police are ready for their meeting with Tancredo. "First show them the e-mail!" he tells Espinosa. Then he asks me to turn off my tape recorder. I can't report what he told me. Let's just say Tancredo has previously acknowledged receiving death threats from people who call him a racist and a bigot. Referring to his work in Congress, Tancredo had told me, "The only way I can survive here is to be as visible as I can possibly be." But visibility can be a mixed blessing. ■

Amman Dispatch

Mad Hattar

BY DAN EPHRON

ALI HATTAR KNEW the lecture would land him in trouble with the Jordanian authorities. In a dingy hall in Amman last December, under a slightly crooked photograph of King Abdullah, Hattar delivered a 90-minute PowerPoint presentation that depicted the United States as a criminal state and called on Jordanians to boycott U.S. products. Much of his argument relied on embellishments and conspiracy theories that circulate widely in the Middle East. One slide showed images of bombed-out Falluja, a seat of Sunni resistance in Iraq, above the caption HIROSHIMA 2. A photo montage portrayed the McDonald's arches in Mecca, Islam's holiest city, with the commentary, THIS IS HOW THEY RESPECT RELIGIONS. Its crudeness notwithstanding, the presentation was enough to infuriate the Mukhabarat—Jordan's domestic intelligence service—which Hattar believes had planted agents in the audience. "I said to my wife when I left the house that I would not be coming back that night," the 59-year-old mechanical engineer told me recently, standing in the same hall where he had delivered the fateful speech. He wasn't exactly right: The authorities actually came for him the following day.

Hattar, who now faces up to two years in prison for the presentation, poses a particular dilemma for Jordan and, by extension, for the United States, which has long been Jordan's ally and, more recently, has enthusiastically pushed democratization in the Middle East. The United States

Dan Ephron is Jerusalem correspondent for NEWSWEEK.

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holds Jordan up as an example of a liberal Arab nation, but Hattar's case highlights the country's less tolerant side. Although his rhetoric is often angry and combative, Hattar is no gun-toting terrorist. His political activity is confined to the lectures he gives at the headquarters of Jordan's professional unions—engineers, doctors, lawyers, and journalists—and to the columns he writes for the weekly newspaper *Al Sabeel*. He's not even an Islamic fundamentalist. Hattar is a Christian whose rhetoric is laced with the frayed clichés of 1960s pan-Arabism. To him, Israel is almost always "the Zionist state" or "the Zionist entity," and he has spent years discouraging members of the country's professional unions from forging business and cultural ties with Israel, with which Jordan signed a peace agreement in 1994.

Yet Hattar clearly has struck a nerve with the Amman regime. Jordan has tried hard to stifle even trifling anti-American rhetoric with measures that, since the Al Qaeda attacks of September 11, have grown increasingly repressive. And that erosion in government tolerance of dissent not only undermines Jordan's image but also causes many Jordanians to laugh off George W. Bush's frequent remarks about advancing democracy in the Middle East. "It's hard to take [Bush] seriously when things are only getting worse here," says Hani Dahleh, a lawyer who heads Jordan's Arab Organization for Human Rights.

IN FACT, THOUGH Jordan's electoral system is more democratic than that of many Arab countries—it holds regular parliamentary elections, though the king holds ultimate power—its human rights record is only slightly better than that of its neighbors. In the last year alone, Jordanian police rounded up scores of political activists for either demonstrating against the U.S.-led war in Iraq or voicing support for Islamic groups. Writers and academics who criticize the regime are routinely censored or blacklisted, according to rights groups. And dozens of prisoners have been held for months or years without trial. "Jordan has a reputation of being this benign, boring, Ohio kind of place, but really, it's not," says Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division. "The truth is, the security services are incredibly oppressive. They're everywhere." Whitson says that, during the Iraq war, Jordanian intelligence agents were sent into elementary schools to make sure teachers were not speaking out against the United States. "They were worried about mass demonstrations against the war turning into mass demonstrations against the monarchy," she says.

Part of the problem is the control the regime exerts over even the groups meant to serve as watchdogs of the government. On a crisp day winter day, I visited the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR), Jordan's best-known civil liberties group. The organization is housed in a stately building on one of Amman's main thoroughfares: One Jordanian told me the building used to be an inn where Yasir Arafat stayed during visits to Jordan. The NCHR was created by the government in 2002, and, though the NCHR charter guarantees "full financial and administrative independence," a few details about the center suggest otherwise. Its chairman, Ahmad Obeidat, is a former director of the Mukhabarat—the same security service that arrested Hattar. NCHR is the only rights group allowed to inspect conditions in Jordan's prisons. A report issued by the group earlier in the year gave the prison service a clean bill of health, though there are widespread allegations of beating and torture in Jordanian prisons.

Taleb Al Saqqaf, an NCHR lawyer who heads the Center's complaints and legal services unit, told me Hattar's case was not complicated. Jordanian law forbids criticism of the monarchy, Al Saqqaf explained. It also prohibits remarks that could appear to damage Jordan's relations with other countries. Saqqaf received a complaint from Hattar's daughter after the Mukhabarat picked her father up two months ago. The lawyer said he looked into it and concluded the arrest was legal. "We believe the procedures were followed. There were no violations, so there was no room for us to intervene."

Surprisingly, many Jordanian officials who speak proudly of their country's relative political openness approve of Hattar's arrest. Mamdouh Abbadi, a lawmaker and a former mayor of Amman, told me Jordan was not yet ready for full democracy and might fall under Islamic rule if the process were rushed. "We don't have a solid base of political parties, and, without parties, you can't just order democracy," he said. Instead, Abbadi said, Jordan was slowly building the institutions of democracy, in part with U.S. aid money. In fact, U.S. assistance to Jordan has tripled in the last two years, to more than $1.5 billion annually, mainly as a reward for Jordan's support in the Iraq war. "This is a big part of our budget. It's very important for Jordan," said Abbadi. "And it's another reason to be cautious about criticizing America."

HOW MUCH ATTENTION is Hattar's case getting in Washington, where the White House has celebrated the protests in Lebanon and potential political change in Egypt? While the State Department mentions Hattar's plight in its annual report on human rights abuses around the world, Bush, when asked about this case at a news conference in January, said he was unaware of the details. Instead, he repeated his inaugural address message on the Middle East: "I urge my friend, his majesty, to make sure that democracy continues to advance in Jordan."

But, for many human rights activists, Bush's words fell short. Though Whitson of Human Rights Watch concedes Hattar is no model dissident, she says the United States, to preserve its credibility, must pressure its Arab allies to stop gagging dissenters, even if their criticism is pointed at Washington. "Am I going to nominate Ali Hattar as the human rights activist of the year? No," she told me. "But, if they can't let a guy like this jabber on, more serious-minded critics of the monarchy don't stand a chance." For Jordanian authorities, that might be the whole idea. ■

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The lost art of Democratic narrative.

Story Time

BY ROBERT B. REICH

DEMOCRATS ARE FINALLY waking up to the fact that Republicans have succeeded in framing the issues to their advantage. Tax "relief," tort "reform," regulatory "burden," and "opportunity society," for example, have all defined public debate in a way that benefits the GOP. But, though Democrats have finally started talking about how they can recast their ideas to best appeal to the public, they've failed to realize that the rhetorical challenge they face is deeper than simply finding the right words and phrases. For Democrats to win back the heart and soul of the electorate, they have to speak to the basic stories that have defined and animated the United States since its founding. For most of the last century, they did this instinctively, but, over the last ten years or so, they have tended to speak in technocratic terms while conservative Republicans have mastered the art of the political narrative and, in doing so, exiled Democrats from politics itself.

There are four essential American stories. The first two are about hope; the second two are about fear.

The Triumphant Individual. This is the familiar tale of the little guy who works hard, takes risks, believes in himself, and eventually gains wealth, fame, and honor. It's the story of the self-made man (or, more recently, woman) who bucks the odds, spurns the naysayers, and shows what can be done with enough gumption and guts. He's instantly recognizable: plainspoken, self-reliant, and uncompromising in his ideals—the underdog who makes it through hard work and faith in himself. Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* is the first in a long line of U.S. self-help manuals about how to make it through self-sacrifice and diligence. The story is epitomized in the life of Abe Lincoln, born in a log cabin, who believed that "the value of life is to improve one's condition." The theme was captured in Horatio Alger's hundred or so novellas, whose heroes all rise promptly and predictably from rags to riches. It's celebrated in the tales of immigrant peddlers who become millionaire tycoons. And it's found in the manifold stories of downtrodden fighters who undertake dangerous quests and find money and glory. Think Rocky Balboa, Norma Rae, and Erin Brockovich. The moral: With enough effort and courage, anyone can make it in the United States.

The Benevolent Community. This is the story of neighbors and friends who roll up their sleeves and pitch in for the common good. Its earliest formulation was John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity," delivered on board a ship in Salem Harbor just before the Puritans landed in 1630—a version of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, in which the new settlers would be "as a City upon a Hill," "delight in each other," and be "of the same body." Similar communitarian and religious images were found among the abolitionists, suffragettes, and civil rights activists of the 1950s and 1960s. "I have a dream that every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low," said Martin Luther King Jr., extolling the ideal of the national community. The story is captured in the iconic New England town meeting, in frontier settlers erecting one another's barns, in neighbors volunteering as firefighters and librarians, and in small towns sending their high school achievers to college and their boys off to fight foreign wars. It suffuses Norman Rockwell's paintings and Frank Capra's movies. Consider the last scene in *It's a Wonderful Life*, when George learns he can count on his neighbors' generosity and goodness, just as they had always counted on him.

The Mob at the Gates. In this story, the United States is a beacon light of virtue in a world of darkness, uniquely blessed but continuously endangered by foreign menaces. Hence our endless efforts to contain the barbarism and tyranny beyond our borders. Daniel Boone fought Indians—white America's first evil empire. Davy Crockett battled Mexicans. The story is found in the Whig's anti-English and pro-tariff histories of the United States, in the anti-immigration harangues of the late nineteenth century, and in World War II accounts of Nazi and Japanese barbarism. It animates modern epics about space explorers (often sporting the stars and stripes) battling alien creatures bent on destroying the world. The narrative gave special force to cold war tales during the '50s of an international communist plot to undermine U.S. democracy and subsequently of "evil" empires and axes. The underlying lesson: We must maintain vigilance, lest diabolical forces overwhelm us.

The Rot at the Top. The last story concerns the malevolence of powerful elites. It's a tale of corruption, decadence, and irresponsibility in high places—of conspiracy against the common citizen. It started with King George III, and, to this day, it shapes the way we view government—mostly

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with distrust. The great bullies of American fiction have often symbolized Rot at the Top: William Faulkner's Flem Snopes, Willie Stark as the Huey Long–like character in *All the King's Men*, Lionel Barrymore's demonic Mr. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life*, and the antagonists that hound the Joad family in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Suspicions about Rot at the Top have inspired what historian Richard Hofstadter called the paranoid style in U.S. politics—from the pre–Civil War Know-Nothings and Anti-Masonic movements through the Ku Klux Klan and Senator Joseph McCarthy's witch hunts. The myth has also given force to the great populist movements of U.S. history, from Andrew Jackson's attack on the Bank of the United States in the 1830s through William Jennings Bryan's prairie populism of the 1890s.

SPEAK TO THESE four stories and you resonate with the tales Americans have been telling each other since our founding—the two hopeful stories rendered more vivid by contrast to the two fearful ones. But the challenge isn't just to find a good speechwriter or a cunning political consultant, or to mine focus groups and polls. Candidates must say what they believe and speak the truth as they see it. (Americans can spot a fake thousands of miles away.)

These four mental boxes are always going to be filled somehow—if not by Democrats, then by Republicans—because people don't think in terms of isolated policies or issues. If they're to be understandable, policies and issues must fit into larger narratives about where we have been as a nation, what we are up against, and where we could be going. Major shifts in governance—in party alignments and political views—have been precipitated by one party or the other becoming better at telling these four stories.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, progressives and Democrats filled all four boxes. They accused leaders of big business of being the Rot at the Top. They argued that the large industrial concentrations of the era, the trusts, were stifling the upward mobility of millions of potential Triumphant Individuals and poisoning democracy. During his 1912 campaign, Woodrow Wilson promised to wage "a crusade against powers that have governed us ... that have limited our development, that have determined our lives, that have set us in a straightjacket to do as they please." The struggle to break up the trusts would be nothing less than "a second struggle for emancipation," by a national Benevolent Community intent on restoring freedom and democracy. Wilson's Mob at the Gates, meanwhile, was composed of the large, bellicose states of prewar Europe who posed similar challenges to democratic freedoms. Wilson grimly rallied Americans to "defeat once and for all ... the sinister forces" that rendered peace impossible.

Theodore Roosevelt, of course, shared Wilson's antipathy toward trusts, but, by the 1920s, Republicans were mostly apologists for big business and Wall Street. That was OK with Americans as long as the economy roared, but it left the Grand Old Party vulnerable in harder times, which soon came. Their approach to foreign policy was mainly to avoid the Mob at the Gates—close the doors to immigrants, erect tariff walls, and isolate the nation. They celebrated the wealth of Triumphant Individuals but didn't champion upward mobility or equal opportunity, and they offered no particular view of the United States as a Benevolent Community. As such, they stayed firmly in the minority most of the first half of the twentieth century.

Indeed, the Great Depression and World War II presented the United States with palpable illustrations of the Democratic stories. By the 1930s, the Rot at the Top included Wall Street as well as big business. In the 1936 presidential campaign, Franklin D. Roosevelt warned against "economic royalists" who had impressed the whole of society into service. "The hours men and women worked, the wages they received, the conditions of their labor ... these had passed beyond the control of the people, and were imposed by this new industrial dictatorship," he warned. What was at stake, he concluded, was nothing less than the "survival of democracy."

To cope with the Depression, Americans needed a national Benevolent Community. "I see one-third of our nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished," FDR told a nation whose citizens clearly understood they were all in this together. He described the purpose of the New Deal as "extending to our national life the old principle of the local community." "We are determined," Roosevelt said, "to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern." The Social Security Act was not just a social insurance scheme, but the very symbol of national solidarity. Henceforth, all American families would share the risk of becoming unemployed or losing the family's breadwinner or retiring without adequate savings. And then, of course, came Adolf Hitler's war, which cemented this national unity as FDR led the country into battle with the most fearsome Mob at the Gates it had ever encountered, over the objections of Republican isolationists.

DEMOCRATS MANAGED THE transition from Depression and world war to postwar prosperity and the cold war with only slight alterations in story line. The Benevolent Community remained at the core of Harry S Truman's Fair Deal, John F. Kennedy's New Frontier, and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. The upwardly mobile Triumphant Individual depended on federal provisions—the G.I. bill, government-backed mortgages, a guarantee of equal civil rights. Meanwhile, the Democrats continued their assault on the Mob at the Gates, but now the Mob was the dangerous and expansive Soviet Union. Truman stopped the communists in Korea. Kennedy stopped them in Berlin and during the Cuban missile crisis. And he tried to stop them in Vietnam, which he saw as "the finger in the dike" holding back the Soviets. Johnson, of course, tragically tried and failed to erect a dam against the North Vietnamese and their patrons. While Republicans continued to wrestle with the isolationists and nervous Nellies—

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such as Senator Robert Taft of Ohio—Democrats spoke of paying any price and bearing any burden to protect the United States.

But, in the '60s, the Rot at the Top gradually dropped out of the Democratic message. Gone were tales of greedy businessmen or unscrupulous financiers. This was partly because the economy had changed profoundly. Postwar prosperity allowed the middle class to explode in size and the gap between rich and poor to shrink. White-collar workers were now abundant, and blue-collar workers got generous wage increases that could be absorbed by the huge postwar market. Rot at the Top rhetoric was also a casualty of the Vietnam War, which spawned an anti-establishment and anti-authoritarian New Left and split Democrats down the middle. For many liberals, the Rot came to be personified by Johnson, his defense secretary, Robert McNamara, and even the federal government itself. (Ironically, Richard Nixon's White House and the Watergate scandal would hurt the Democrats, too, by confirming that the Rot at the Top was to be found in government rather than among business elites.)

The Vietnam War also undermined Democrats' confidence about the Mob at the Gates. Soviet communism remained dangerous, to be sure, but the McGovern wing of the party had no clear plan of action. Indeed, its approach seemed redolent of the Republican isolationists of the earlier part of the century, who wanted the United States simply to turn its back on the Mob. And, after President Carter and the hostage crisis, even when Democrats did try to tell this story, they seemed uncertain of themselves. In short, Democrats and progressives came off as confused and conflicted about the dangers the United States faced. They stopped talking both about the Rot at the Top and about the Mob at the Gates, and thus ceased giving Americans convincing stories about what the nation was up against.

Enter Ronald Reagan, master storyteller, who jumped into the conceptual breach that Democrats had left open. For Reagan, the Mob at the Gates was not merely a Soviet Union that needed to be contained, but an Evil Empire that had to be destroyed. The Rot at the Top was big government—Washington insiders and arrogant bureaucrats who stifled Triumphant Individuals—and the Benevolent Community's foundation was not New Deal–style programs but small, traditional neighborhoods in which people voluntarily helped one another, free from government interference. (Social spending could be cut, therefore, without threatening the mythology of benevolence.) The Triumphant Individual, meanwhile, was no longer the little guy in need of a helping hand, but the business entrepreneur who would spawn new companies and industries if unencumbered by government regulations and taxes. Through the alchemy of supply-side ("trickle-down") economics, his self-enriching triumphs would, it was said, help us all. Reagan's overall message was as hopeful and upbeat as FDR's: "America is back and standing tall," Reagan said in 1984. "We've begun to restore the great American values—the dignity of work, the warmth of family, the strength of neighborhood, and the nourishment of human freedom."

Democrats never regained the capacity to tell their versions of the stories. Even when the implosion of the Soviet Union ended one of the Republicans' most powerful stories and temporarily left the United States without a Mob at the Gates, the stories American politicians told remained Republican stories. The Rot at the Top was still big government. To be sure, Bill Clinton won the presidency in 1992 promising to "fight for the forgotten middle class" against the forces of "greed," but Clinton inherited such a huge budget deficit from George H.W. Bush that he couldn't put up much of a fight. And, after losing his bid for universal health care, Clinton himself announced that the era of big government was over—and he proved it by ending welfare. Clinton's Benevolent Community remained, as it was under his Republican predecessors, a nation of volunteers; Clinton appointed a commission on volunteerism and encouraged the private sector to offer jobs to former welfare recipients. And he urged would-be Triumphant Individuals (who were working harder than ever with no appreciable increase in pay and benefits) to embrace a new covenant of personal "opportunity and responsibility."

Under George W. Bush, the stories have changed somewhat, but all continue to reflect Republican values, crowding out Democratic interpretations. The September 11 terrorist attacks, of course, powerfully revived the Mob at the Gates tale, and, although Bush never quite connected the dots between global terrorists and his Axis of Evil (including Saddam Hussein), the basic story line he offered was familiar enough to give the Bush presidency a compelling mission. By Bush's second inaugural, that mission had grown even larger—a battle against tyrants and oppressors all over the world, similar to those Wilson had railed against almost 90 years before, and perfectly fitting the mental box Americans have always reserved for the Mob at the Gates.

Bush's Triumphant Individual, meanwhile, is a property owner who achieves the "dignity and security of economic independence" by getting rich off his assets, as Bush put it in his second inaugural. The "ownership society" is intended, as Bush explained, to make "every citizen an agent of his or her own destiny." In this universe, there is no more need for national benevolence. In fact, Social Security—which had been the very symbol of FDR's Benevolent Community—is to be turned into private accounts that Triumphant Individuals can use to gain personal wealth. In Bush's retelling, the Benevolent Community is found in religious congregations—in "faith-based" organizations that "rally the armies of compassion in our communities to fight a very different war against poverty and hopelessness, a daily battle waged house to house and heart to heart." Not even the Indian Ocean tsunami initially deserved much by way of official government aid. U.S. benevolence found expression instead in the voluntary contributions of corporations and private citizens. "The greatest source of America's generosity is not our govern-

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ment," Bush explained when he appointed his father and Clinton to head a relief commission. "It's the good heart of the American people."

But it is in the retelling of the story about the Rot at the Top that the younger Bush and his cohorts have departed most from preceding Republican versions. Rather than big government, their Rot is lodged in America's "cultural elites"—depicted as influential liberals in prestigious coastal universities, the upper strata of New York and Hollywood, and the media. This Rot disdains ordinary working Americans, rejects religion and patriotism, celebrates Hollywood's licentiousness, and seeks to impose sexual permissiveness—including abortion and gay marriage—on good, God-fearing Americans. A TV advertisement aired in 2003 by a conservative group during the Democratic primary campaign described this new Rot as a "tax-hiking, government-spending, latte-drinking, sushi-eating, Volvo-driving, *New York Times*–reading, body-piercing, Hollywood-loving, left-wing freak show," and, in the general election campaign, Republicans repeatedly attacked John Kerry as a "Massachusetts liberal" who was part of the "Chardonnay-and-brie set." Bush mocked Kerry for finding a "new nuance" each day on Iraq, drawing out the word "nuance" to emphasize Kerry's French cultural elitism. "In Texas, we don't do nuance," he said, to laughter and applause. House Republican leader Tom DeLay opened his campaign speeches by saying "Good morning, or, as John Kerry would say, 'Bonjour.' "

WHAT WERE DEMOCRATS to do? All their stories had been replaced. In the 2004 election, Kerry argued forcefully that Bush's Iraq policy would not succeed against terrorism and that Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy should be repealed in order to generate enough revenue for a modest step toward universally affordable health care. But Kerry failed to place these and his other policy prescriptions into the four stories that Americans had always heard and that made sense of the world they knew. As a result, Kerry's policies lacked context and meaning. Where did Kerry want to take the United States? What did he stand for? Absent a clear narrative about the Mob, the Rot, the Benevolent, and the Triumphant, his policies were just ... policies. As such, they were no match for Bush's convictions about what America should do—no match, in other words, for Bush's recasting of the Mob at the Gates as vicious terrorists that had to be killed or would kill us (and against whom, he said, Kerry could not be trusted to use force); of the Triumphant Individual as people free to pursue individual wealth (whom Kerry would smother with taxes); of the Benevolent Community as a collection of religious people with heart (of whom Kerry was contemptuous); and of the Rot at the Top as an arrogant cultural elite (of which Kerry himself was a member).

The challenge for Democrats and progressives is not simply to manufacture a new set of stories but to find and tell stories that match their convictions. The stories must also resonate with what Americans sense to be the truth. Democrats might say, for example, that the Mob at the Gates isn't global terrorism and it's not despotic tyrants. Terrorism is a technique, and tyrants exist all over the world (are we going to invade China?). There is a Mob out there, though. They are global gangs of thugs like Al Qaeda—and they are dangerous. They must be met by force. They must also be policed—their movements monitored, their access to dangerous weapons denied, their ranks infiltrated. But the United States can't police them alone. We need a new global alliance against terrorist organizations, led by the United States. (Democrats created NATO; maybe now it's time for GATO, a Global Anti-Terrorist Organization.) Meanwhile, America's potential Triumphant Individuals depend critically on two things to prosper in the new economy: a good education and good medical care. (This was the subtext of the riveting story Senator Barack Obama told at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.) Almost every American family is struggling to obtain them. Yet, if we join together in a Benevolent Community to provide them to every American citizen, all of us stand to gain. The rising tide of productivity and wealth will lift the nation as a whole.

In this retelling, the main thing holding us back is the Rot at the Top—concentrated wealth and power to a degree we haven't seen in this nation since the late nineteenth century. Mammoth corporations and hugely rich individuals have abused their power and wealth to corrupt our democracy, take over much of our media, give executives stratospheric pay packages while firing workers, and pad their nests with special tax breaks and corporate welfare. In this, they have been helped by a Republican Congress and White House whose guiding ideology seems less capitalism than cronyism, as shown time and again through legislative sops to the pharmaceutical industry, the credit card companies, and Wall Street. (Indeed, with its mounting ethical troubles, the GOP's congressional leadership is fast becoming another example of Rot at the Top—an example the Democrats could seize on as Gingrich and company did in 1994.) Or, as Al Gore said in 2000, in a remarkably prescient speech, George W. Bush was bankrolled by "a new generation of special interest power brokers who would like nothing better than a pliant president who would bend public policy to suit their purposes and profits."

Gore came in for a lot of criticism after his defeat from Democrats who felt uncomfortable with his description of a nation divided between "the people" and "the powerful." But Al Gore was on to something. After all, he got the most votes. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Seeing It Through

ALL OF US CAN KNOW A great deal more about war than our forebears did. Photography has taken care of that. First came the still camera—notably Roger Fenton's pictures of the Crimean War and Mathew Brady's of the American Civil War. (I've always thought it chillingly apt that the first war pictures were done by the still camera, recording the end of motion.) In time, in snippets and then more, came the documentary film about battle. Then, of course, television news. Film didn't finish off the romanticization of war, in parades and ballads and rhetoric, but it certainly put the burden on us if we ignored the facts.

GUNNER PALACE
(Palm)

INTIMATE STORIES
(New Yorker)

Now comes a documentary that mainly details what soldiers in the Iraq war do in between the spurts of bloody action. **GUNNER PALACE** is set in Baghdad now. The director, Michael Tucker, an American who lives in Germany, managed with his colleague Petra Epperlein to spend some months in late 2003 and early 2004 with a U.S. Army Field Artillery Division called the Gunners, who were billeted in a palace—one of the many that Saddam Hussein had built for himself and family. The palace is now a bit roughed up after the battle for occupation, but even with the rubble it seems oily.

The Americans posted there are quite aware of the spookiness of living in such a place, from which they emerge daily on their hazardous patrols. Meanwhile, in their rest periods, they enjoy as best they can the swimming pool and putting green and general loftiness of the halls. Mixing in with these men from time to time are native interpreters and local nabobs, some of whom seem genuinely to want to help. (The scenes in which Americans train groups of the Iraqi defense force verge on the risible.)

The patrols are sometimes routine Humvee expeditions through various districts, and the surprise is the lively everyday bustle in the streets. It appears that to the residents the patrols are simply daily occurrences in their lives, like business vans on their various routes around the city. The Americans also carry out sorties: they enter and search possible bomb centers or conspiracy nubs. These raids—at least as we are shown—are conducted with minimal roughness. (We are told that many of the Iraqis whom the Americans arrest will be sent to Abu Ghraib.) American casualties occur, some fatal, but though we see soldiers being flown to a German air base, we never actually see blood.

Many of the American soldiers get the chance to deliver reactions and comments to the camera. Only once do we hear an opinion about the purpose of the war: one man says something about helping the Iraqi people to be free. Most of the remarks are jocular or collegial or longings for home. The most memorable of these comments are the passages of rap, lively and pungent, offered by some of the black soldiers in the group.

We are told that part of the method of this picture, if not its intent, derives from American television's reality shows. The connection is somewhat mind-spinning. If we take those shows as model, we then have a film of reality about as real as that well-worn word can get, yet one inspired by an invention of commercial enterprise to make money out of people who are willing to do almost anything for money and publicity. Certainly most of these soldiers must know reality television. So most of them were aware that the verity of their lives was being shaped on film in some degree by the mode of commercially managed reality.

In the political sense, except for the one cited remark, this is a carefully sanitized film. Any and every view of the Iraq war can be supported by it, which presumably is why it was permitted to be made. *Gunner Palace* is less about the fighting of the Iraq war than about how some American troops are living through it. Any criticism of the film can be distorted into a criticism of the men—not exactly what is intended. But the picture is too long. It repeats and repeats. Thirty minutes, instead of its eighty-six, could have told us all we need to know about the danger and tedium of these lives. One other possibility would have been to intensify the effect through sheer mimesis. This picture extended to six or seven hours would have given its viewers a grinding bone-deep sense of what it is like just to get through these days.

The name of Hugo Colace ought to be known to the film world. He is the cinematographer of an Argentinean film called **INTIMATE STORIES** that was shot in Patagonia, south of Buenos Aires. Not since some Tibetan films have I seen such vastness, sparsely inhabited, almost ringing with immensity. But Colace has done more than depict space: he has reapportioned earth and sky. The human beings seem to be moving on a thin flat crust of brown that is snuggled under an unbelievably huge blue bowl.

This is the third feature by Carlos Sorin. (His second starred Daniel Day-Lewis.) He works with ingratiating ease and just enough weight to convince us of the importance of the material to him. This was needed because the screenplay by Pablo Solarz is tinged with artifice. It tells three stories. A young mother gets a chance to be on a television show and perhaps win a food processor. An old man sets out alone to find his lost dog, which has been sighted miles away. A traveling salesman with serious intentions toward a woman on his route has a cake made for her child's birthday. These three stories ultimately reach their unexpected conclusions—unexpected because the tenor of the film promises a dram of irony, and even that dram is a bit sweetened.

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Only two of the actors are professionals, so Sorin must get the neo-realism accolade, less and less rare, for evoking true and sometimes touching small performances from people who have interrupted their lives to be in his film and who now, presumably, are back in their lives. But that is exactly a question that the film leaves with us. What *are* those lives? How do the people of Patagonia live? We travel through the region a good deal, and we never see a crop nor a herd of livestock. Patagonia has rich mineral deposits and coal and iron and oil; but we see no sign of them and no one mentions them. Perhaps Sorin wanted to give the impression of a handful of people clinging to existence in their various ways out of sheer stubbornness. ■

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Plays and Prophecies

I HAVE REMARKED BEFORE ON THE mystifying ability of great playwrights to predict human actions and calamitous events. One example I recently noted is the similarity between the way Shakespeare's Cleopatra abuses a messenger who brings her bad news and the Bush administration's discrediting of people such as Joseph Wilson and Richard Clarke when their messages diverge from official Iraq policy (a process I call "maiming the messenger"). Another example of prophetic Shakespeare can be found in these lines from Sonnet 64, curiously resonant of the recent catastrophe in Southeast Asia:

> When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
> Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
> And the firm soil win of the watery main,
> Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
> When I have seen such interchange of state,
> Or state itself confounded to decay,
> Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate—
> That Time will come and take my love away.
> This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
> But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

How could Shakespeare, who lived near the North Sea, have imagined what sounds very much like the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean, with its devastating floods and tidal waves, and its confounding impact on people and property?

To take another example: the ongoing flap over the adversarial style and controversial actions of Lawrence Summers has a theatrical precedent in Euripides's *Bacchae*. King Pentheus rudely spurns an ecstatic new religion, headed by Dionysus, which even his own mother has embraced. As a result of Pentheus's stubborn resistance, he is torn to pieces by maenads. His mother, Agave, gets to brandish his severed head, while Dionysus threatens all blasphemers with a similar fate.

The maenads of political correctness at Harvard (a group that includes a number of male professors) have visited a milder form of Pentheus's doom on Summers for some blasphemous remarks he made at a National Bureau of Economic Research conference in January about whether women share men's aptitude for mathematics and the physical sciences. Summers's speculations on the subject, however tentative, were no doubt misguided, as he himself has duly admitted. They were a mistake of judgment; but they are being treated as an impermissible deviation from one of the central precepts of current campus dogma, which is that generalizations about sexual or racial characteristics are strictly forbidden—unless, of course, they apply to white males.

Ibsen also wrote a prophetic play about a man whose opinions affront received opinion, and who suffers retaliatory action as a result. *An Enemy of the People* concerns a doctor who discovers that the supposedly therapeutic springs on which a town depends for its prosperity are actually contaminated. Instead of the gratitude he expects for saving tourists from a lethal version of Montezuma's revenge, he is excoriated, pilloried, and exiled for threatening the livelihood of the town.

Admittedly, the Harvard-Ibsen parallel is hardly exact. Summers has made no beneficial discoveries regarding the water supply in Eliot House, though his improvements at Harvard have been substantial (the university's generous loans to poorer students, its expansion into Allston, even some belated efforts to increase the number of female professors). But many professors are treating Summers in the way the town treated Doctor Stockmann, as an enemy of the people who deserves no better than to be expelled willy-nilly from the community.

It is a commonplace that free expression is not highly valued in the academy these days. But it is unusual to find a faculty trying to impose speech codes on the office of the president instead of the other way around. (Another Harvard innovation!) Previously, Summers ruffled faculty feathers by openly opposing as anti-Semitic demands that Harvard divest from Israel and by suggesting that an African American professor, Cornel West, should consider improving his scholarship. Many have complained about his hectoring manner and "intimidating" style (though one faculty member wondered how tenured Harvard professors could ever feel truly threatened).

But as the February 22 faculty meeting made abundantly clear, the real issue here is one of power. A contentious, scrappy, and sometimes unmannerly administrator, Summers has been making decisions and exercising privileges that Harvard professors believe traditionally belong to them alone. And while a few university women have been understandably upset by speculations they consider unsupported and insulting, other faculty have seized on this event as a pretext to pluck his presidential feathers. At its March 15 meeting, the faculty passed one resolution of no confidence in the president, and another expressing regrets about his remarks. The seriously wounded Summers may not last another term. Faced with similar public humiliation from his antagonists, the proud Coriolanus replied, "I banish you!" Ah, the days of classical glory. Summers, more conciliatory, has abjectly apologized to the faculty and promised to change his ways. Whether he stays or goes, his office has been seriously compromised, if not emasculated.

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An Enemy of the People happened to have been Arthur Miller's single attempt at theatrical adaptation, no doubt for reasons of a similar nature. His recent death reminds us that he, too, was once a victim of political hysteria—that 1950s form of jihad known as McCarthyism. Hauled before a congressional committee investigating communist infiltration into the entertainment industry, Miller refused to name names, though he was never a party member himself. The committee chairman offered to waive prosecution if Miller would persuade his wife, Marilyn Monroe, to be photographed with him. Miller refused and was thereupon convicted of contempt of Congress (a conviction that was later overturned).

Miller wrote *The Crucible* as a commentary on this experience, using the Salem witch trials as a metaphor for the proceedings of the House Un-American Activities Committee. As Robert Warshow and others observed at the time, the analogy was faulty. The witches of Salem were a figment of the diseased Puritan imagination, while American communists were a reality, though one admittedly exaggerated by the feverish right-wing mind. But like Miller's behavior before the committee, the play was a noble act of conscience, as well as an implicit indictment of all those (including Elia Kazan, his former friend and director) who had informed on others in order to save their own professional skins.

The Crucible was not a prophetic play so much as a disguised evocation of an existing event. There is a difference (as M. H. Abrams noted in *The Mirror and the Lamp*) between visionary artists who light up new pathways and analytical artists who reflect an existing reality. Arthur Miller was surely among the latter species. Although not a prophetic playwright, he offers a powerful example of the playwright as witness, particularly to the Great Depression that generated much of his art. *All My Sons* indicted profiteering war contractors. *Death of a Salesman* criticized a society that discarded working people "like an old shoe" after they had ceased to be useful. *A View From the Bridge*, as well as being another attack on political informers, was a study of illegal immigration. *The American Clock* followed the downward spiral of a middle-class family after the stock market crash.

These plays, and most of his plays that followed, were powered by the indignant energies of a previous age. One of the few clear voices of the theatrical left, Miller never got hoarse battling injustice, inequality, and hypocrisy. But he lacked any formal ideology through which to confront these wrongs, and so he tended to duck the issue of social or political responsibility. It is significant that one of Miller's most oft-quoted lines—"Attention must be paid"—does not have a subject. Who should pay attention? Me, you, the president of the United States, Yogi Bear? One of my continuing objections to Miller's work was that it constituted the Theater of Guilt, a form that leaves the audience wallowing in self-recrimination, paying off its conscience by throwing a handful of change at the homeless.

Whatever the reason, Miller eventually began to lose his credibility with the majority of American critics, though his name continued to be inseparable from twentieth-century American drama. Miller often expressed regret over the way his own country had ignored or rejected his later work, the numerous awards and tributes bestowed on the earlier plays notwithstanding. "When I looked back," he wrote in his painfully honest memoir *Timebends*, "it was obvious that aside from *Death of a Salesman* every one of my plays had originally met with a majority of bad, indifferent, or sneering notices.... I exist as a playwright without a major reviewer in my corner.... Only abroad and in some American places outside New York has criticism embraced my plays."

Up until the powerful Broadway revival of *Death of a Salesman* by the Goodman Theatre in 1999, that statement had been regrettably true. While his later plays were regularly dismissed by the major media critics, who generally prefer writers they have discovered themselves, the name of Arthur Miller remained a talisman in Great Britain. Bernard Shaw once remarked that England and America are two nations divided by a common tongue. It seemed more accurate to say that we were two nations divided by a common playwright.

I should confess that up until this mainstream backlash I was among those miscreants who failed to stand in Arthur Miller's corner. As a minority reviewer for THE NEW REPUBLIC, a magazine with virtually no impact on the box office, I saw no reason to pull my punches regarding such inflated Miller ideas as "the common man as tragic hero," especially when it led to the popular conviction that there was an unbroken line between Agamemnon in his chariot and Willy Loman in his Chevy. (One popular theater anthology was called *From Aeschylus to Arthur Miller*.) To me, the line was clearer between *Death of a Salesman* and Yiddish family drama as drawn through the plays of Clifford Odets. As the Goodman Theatre revival of *Death of a Salesman* made clear, the overwhelming power of Miller's masterpiece was a result of his uncanny understanding not of tragic theory but of family dynamics.

Yet when the majority reviewers also began to turn on Miller, as well as on Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee, I was appalled, and not a little contrite. It was one thing for a few of us fringe apostates to nip at the heels of the great. But if our three major playwrights couldn't receive the respect they deserved from mainstream American reviewers, then there was something a little rotten in the state of criticism, and I felt an obligation to defend them. This may sound like sheer perversity, or some crazy form of territoriality. But it was a lesson that Miller already knew in his bones—that there were only two saleable stories for the mainstream press, success and failure. Or, to paraphrase an ancient Greek maxim, those whom the media would destroy, they first make famous.

I am relieved that, before his death at the age of eighty-nine, Miller was able to regain his place at the height of his profession. I am also relieved that I had the opportunity to recant some of my harsher criticisms, most publicly in an introduction I made to his Massey Lecture at Harvard in 1999. I still have problems with Miller's often ungainly prose style, but then O'Neill was no Demosthenes either. And if Miller had the polemicist's weakness for similes rather than the poet's capacity for metaphors, it is impossible not to respect his consuming dramatic power, as well as his profound influence on later American dramatists, notably David Mamet (who also explored the jungle habitat of the salesman), Tony Kushner (who studied the virulent effects of red-baiting, particularly on Ethel Rosenberg), and Donald Margulies (who paid tribute to Miller's family conflicts and urban themes in *The Loman Family Picnic* and his current production, *Brooklyn Boy*).

A public intellectual as well as a private artist, Arthur Miller played a pivotal

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role in most of the cultural and political dramas of our time. Particularly in his role as a president of PEN, he forcefully represented the interests of persecuted literary people throughout the world. He was American theater's elder statesman, who best embodied our dramatic image both at home and abroad. His death leaves yet another vacant lot in a once beloved and familiar neighborhood. ■

Adam Zagajewski
Words Against Death

SECOND SPACE: NEW POEMS
By Czeslaw Milosz
Translated by the author
and Robert Hass
(Ecco, 102 pp., $23.95)

A WONDROUS AND DIFFICULT intellectual odyssey, one of the most imposing of our time, the life and work of Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish poet who was born in Lithuania, ended before noon on August 14, 2004. It was a Saturday, a beautiful summer day. He died at home, in his apartment in Kraków, at the age of ninety-three. Half an hour later all the radio and television stations in Poland were talking about only one thing: the demise of a poet, his work, the significance of his achievement, the complex romance of his long and strenuous life.

His life was dramatic in many ways, most obviously in the history he lived: World War II, the witnessing (and the bearing witness to) the Holocaust in occupied Europe, the annihilation of Warsaw, communism with its human-friendly dialectic and its inhuman terror, the bitterness of exile, the triumph of the Nobel Prize in 1980, and finally the return in old age to a democratic Poland. During the many years when he lived and worked in California, he was convinced that nobody read his poetry. His loneliness was almost perfect. When he turned sixty, he later told a friend, he did not receive a single card with birthday wishes. There is an anecdote about his meeting Adam Michnik, a young but already famous dissident, in a café in Paris in the 1970s: when Michnik started to recite from memory one after another of Milosz's poems (he can still do it), the poet burst into tears.

His life was not untroubled in the private sphere, either. His second wife, Carol Thigpen, a generation younger than her husband, died two years before him. His final years were lived in solitude. Still, he was not completely isolated: Milosz reigned in the medieval city of Kraków like Goethe in Weimar, greeted in the streets by friends and strangers, visited by young and old poets, giving interviews to local and foreign journalists, and writing (or dictating) until the very end. His eyesight was almost gone and he was nearly deaf—"My most honorable eyes," begins a poem in this posthumous collection, "you are not in the best of shape./... I am slowly moving away from the fairgrounds of the world"; but his intelligence and his memory were intact. And yet his wife's early death was emblematic of the vulnerability of his own life.

And there was still another drama, maybe the most important one, in Milosz's creative life. It has always seemed to me that the importance of his poetry was owed not least to an almost supernatural phenomenon: his mind seemed to be the ideal place, the exact address, of the main spiritual struggle of the twentieth century. His poetry speaks a very individual language; it is unmistakably Miloszian, it has a distinct biography and a distinct geography, it has the taste of his childhood in the black forests of Lithuania and of his many years in sunburnt California, near the San Francisco Bay—and yet it also has an amazing quality of expressing the universal battle between the different metaphysics that characterized the age in which he lived.

Late in his life, in a letter to the pope made public a few days before his funeral, Milosz declared that one of his principal sorrows was his failed desire to comply with Catholic orthodoxy. ("Treat with understanding persons of weak faith," he writes in "Treatise on Theology" in the new book. "Myself included. One day I believe, another I disbelieve.") And yet this desire, not really shocking to a connoisseur of his work, would have surprised his readers some thirty years earlier. Milosz had always been a religious poet, but one rather removed from doctrine, from formal or conventional Catholicism; he spoke from the standpoint of a never-ending quest, from a parcel of dry land that was constantly assailed by waves of despair, and sometimes shaken by a roar of laughter. Indeed, it is easier to think of Milosz's imagination as containing a lot of Beckett's immense sadness and a bit of Claudel's undefeated certainty than to range it on the side of any religious orthodoxy.

Yet the key to Milosz's imagination, if such a key exists, is indicated by the locus of his writing: he had an uncanny capacity for placing his writer's desk in the very center of his century's storms. Maybe that is a definition of poetic intelligence in general: not only craft and knowledge of the tradition (though this is a necessary ingredient), or wisdom concerning the human comedy, but also the more or less instinctive ability to detect the peculiar locale where the gods are sitting and throwing dice.

Milosz's trouble, and his luck, had also to do with the fact that his century was not only obsessed by philosophies but also polluted by ideologies, by murderous intellectual passions. He himself could have become one more victim of the Nazis or the Stalinists. So where is the luck here? It is a good question. But I think that Milosz was not unlike one of those brave doctors trying to discover a cure for a virus who contaminate themselves with it so as to fight it within their own bodies. Hadn't he, as a young poet and essayist, accepted some of the tenets of the strange Hegelian-Marxist creed? First, when very young, he sang the inevitable and imprecisely defined apocalypse, and later he was sometimes fascinated by the monotonous march of history and seemed even to believe in a Spirit hidden behind time's gait. (Some of this can be heard in his "Treatise on Poetry.") But his spirit kept resisting, and finally he was one of the few contaminated doctors who survived the risky experiment, who even thrived on it. And we are all the beneficiaries of his intelligence and his courage.

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In the middle of Milosz's writing life, his poetry took a turn toward the beauty of the singular, of the individual fate, and came to praise it. This is one of the main melodic lines in his work: a hymn to the idiomatic distinctiveness of every human destiny. And yet even this hymn is written against the backdrop of his old Hegelian (or, as he himself preferred to call it, Manichaean) enchantment—and it is made stronger, more passionate and memorable, thanks to this contradiction, this tension. Milosz once attacked Philip Larkin for "Aubade," his great late poem on dying, which Milosz thought was nihilistic; it was a poem that seemed to abandon all hope, all consideration of transcendence. And yet dark, if not quite nihilistic, tones are audible in Milosz's work, too. His short poem "This" is a record of pure despair—and it was given an added significance, as it served as the title poem of his penultimate collection, published in 2000. Here is the second section of "This":

This. Which is like the thoughts of a
homeless man walking in an alien
city in freezing weather.

And like the moment when a tracked-
down Jew glimpses the heavy
helmets of the German police
approaching.

The moment when the crown prince
goes for the first time down to the
city and sees the truth of the world:
misery, sickness, age, and death.

Or the immobile face of someone
who has just understood that he's
been abandoned forever.

Or the irrevocable verdict of the
doctor.

This. Which signifies knocking against
a stone wall and knowing that
the wall will not yield to any
imploration.

Milosz was never a haughty conservative trying to dictate to his contemporaries the rules of correct behavior. He was a profoundly modern poet; he was one of us, wounded by modernity and yet attempting to move beyond this wound. He lived inside a cage, the way we all do, but his song came from outside the cage. This is why his poems are filled with so many voices, all of them talking to God and to each other. His poetry is like a huge old organ with its many pipes, creating a counterpoint of Baroque solidity and depth. The polyphonic structure of Milosz's poetry sets him apart from most of his contemporaries. Zbigniew Herbert, a marvelous poet half a generation younger (he died in 1998), may be regarded as a poet of a single voice (but what a voice!), a lyric poet who also wandered into the regions of philosophy and history, decidedly non-Elysian fields.

But what is polyphonic structure? It does not have much to do with the Bakhtinian notion, developed in connection with Dostoevsky's novels, in which each of the main characters expresses his or her own separate truth or conviction, and not the writer's worldview. Milosz has many voices indeed; he speaks through contradictions, hesitations, moods. He is a searcher, not a claimer; or maybe somebody who claims and searches at the same time. But he is not a fragmented or divided or schizophrenic poet: the various voices speaking through him are elements of an extremely complex modern personality, but they are not a sign of the poet's helplessness, of his failure to attain an essential integrity. Their plurality is a sign of life—and life is always dramatic, and almost never orthodox. Under the Nazi occupation Milosz did not require polyphony in order to condemn the atrocities in the Warsaw ghetto. He resorted to the device somewhat when he came to denounce the horror of communism, which was always less visible, better hidden, than its fascist twin. Mostly he employed the diversity of his voices in his main quarrel, in the old debate about the sacred and the profane, about the possibility of transcendence in the search for meaning in life.

He was a religious poet who doubted a lot. "Wandering on the outskirts of heresy is about right for me," he remarks in "Treatise on Theology." His intellectual honesty was exemplary: not only was he incorruptible in any external or political sense, but also, when reading his essays, we understand that beauty mattered to him less than truth. At least in prose; it was different in poetry, where the beauty of the language had to match the pursuit of truth. When Milosz's poems are not completely successful, this is usually because of their didactic intention, the ambition to serve the larger truth rather than purely poetic impulse.

He saw poetry as an art so important, so potentially powerful within the territory of human reason, that he dismissed poets who cared supremely and exclusively for beautiful combinations of words (if such poets exist), for a hermetic art. Even Celan, whose suffering led him in the direction of hermetic form, was not a convincing poet for Milosz. Milosz insisted upon, and in his writing demonstrated by example, a "more spacious form." Seamus Heaney has described his response to Milosz's poem "Incantation" when it was read to him in Berkeley by Robert Pinsky, who translated it with the author. Here is the poem:

Human reason is beautiful and
invincible.
No bars, no barbed wire, no pulping
of books,
No sentence of banishment can
prevail against it.
It establishes the universal ideas in
language,
And guides our hand so we write
Truth and Justice
With capital letters, lie and oppression
with small.
It puts what should be above things
as they are,
Is an enemy of despair and a friend
of hope.
It does not know Jew from Greek or
slave from master,
Giving us the estate of the world
to manage.
It saves austere and transparent
phrases
From the filthy discord of tortured
words.
It says that everything is new under
the sun,
Opens the congealed fist of the past.
Beautiful and very young are
Philo-Sophia
And poetry, her ally in the service of
the good.
As late as yesterday Nature
celebrated their birth,
The news was brought to the mountains by a unicorn and an echo.
Their friendship will be glorious,
their time has no limit.
Their enemies have delivered
themselves to destruction.

And here is Heaney:

My first experience of these lines,
spoken in the upstairs study of a silent
house, empty that afternoon except
for ourselves, was altogether thrilling
... we were enjoying a poem which

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did things forbidden within an old dispensation to which I was admittedly more subject than my host, who had once studied with Yvor Winters. The poem was, for example, full of abstractions, and to a member of the generation whose poetic ABCs included "A Few Don'ts for Imagists," these unabashed abstract nouns and conceptually aerated adjectives should have been altogether out of the question.... Now here they were in a modern poem—big, pulpit-worthy affirmations, boosted all the further by that one metaphorical flight about a unicorn and an echo in the mountains, and fortified by the hovering irony of the final line.

This is a wonderful depiction of Milosz's otherness, of his furious quest for meaning even if in the process some of the rules of modern aesthetics had to be impatiently brushed away. (Who cares?) And yet his poetry always remains within the limits of the same modernity that he sometimes contested. He was not a nostalgist or a reactionary; he was merely a rigorous man of his own time. Heaney's report suggests something that is often missing in contemporary poetry, which Milosz could deliver majestically: the great seriousness of a discourse concerning the central issues of the human situation accompanied by a disdain for purely formal experiments, for poets scanning only the peripheries of experience or lazily living off the satisfactions of a received skepticism and an easy doubt.

In its entry for Bishop Ausonius, a suave poet of late antiquity who lived in the city of Bordeaux, the Encyclopaedia Britannica employs a lovely noun to characterize his artistic status: it calls him a "trifler." He was too much in love with playfulness, with poetic tricks. Milosz was the opposite of a trifler. His grandeur never left him. But he was never orotund or merely solemn. His seriousness found a counterbalance in his wonderful humor, in powerful explosions of laughter accompanying his conversation.

When one goes back and reads Milosz's longer poems, such as "Treatise on Poetry," "With Trumpets and Zithers," "From the Rising of the Sun," and "Separate Notebooks," and many others, one is dazzled by their range, their depth, their energy. And one wonders how the poet who wrote with such a magnitude of vitality would respond to the onslaught of time. How would such a man age? For these splendid poems, apart from their artistic quality, amounted also to a kind of existential stratagem. By creating poems that were like formidable metaphysical machines uniting past and present, America and Europe, modernity and antiquity, their author had constructed walls of thought and language that shielded him to some extent from the misery of life, from aging, from loneliness. These poems were the very opposite of complaints; they were the very antidote to confessional poetry. The only problem with such beautiful fences is that (as an American poet once wrote) through them "will go nothing except Death and the Rain and To-morrow."

MILOSZ KNEW THIS. (He knew everything.) His poetry in the last decade of his long life opens up, loosens up. There are still no complaints, but there are many lyric poems and some confessions; Milosz became a lyric poet only in his high old age. Until then, he was a poet of mediation. His youth was marked by eschatological expectations, his middle age by mature reflection, by his immense historic and poetic erudition, by his imagination and curiosity. It was the others who aged and died; his numerous elegies—like the unforgettable "Elegy for NN"—were magical tunes that sang the catastrophe befalling others. One sometimes had the impression that the same shamanistic magic that tenderly shrouded the defeated ones in these poems prevented the author of these elegies from sharing their destiny.

There was an iron force built into Milosz's fate. Like a ship captain, he was elected to be the last one in his generation to quit the vessel. He knew that there was some injustice involved in this, and he did all he could to compensate for his own survival: in his elegiac poems, but also in endless longer or shorter biographical notes in his collections of notes and essays, he commemorated friends and acquaintances who perished at different stations of their lives, violently during the war or peacefully later, amid the treacherous serenity of a modern hospital—as if to say, Friends, forgive me my longevity; if I was the one who was chosen to live so long, then it is I who will do the work of memory.

The last years of Milosz's poetic life were different, though; now the time of his own departure moved near. And this was the moment when he became a lyric poet, a poet of unmediated grief. Yet even this is not quite true: the old sense of wonder ("Perhaps only my reverence will save me," as he says in "From the Rising of the Sun") had not entirely disappeared. And his vast intelligence had not deserted him either. Even in his last poems we assist at the duel between despair and faith—and also at something more personal, something new and inevitable: the struggle between an old man's anxiety and his reason long trained in religious awe. In his decades of thinking and writing, Milosz's brilliant mind took on the very shape of religious wonder; and because the latter is always young, or at least atemporal, and somehow immortal, the lyricism of Milosz's late poetry remains very complex, quite dramatic, absolutely unique.

Second Space establishes that Milosz was also one of the great poets of old age. And as in a great symphony, these final poems allow us to hear again, for the last time, the themes for which we have always come to him. Some of the familiar figures return like actors who bow before the public when the spell of the tragedy is almost over. Here once more is Oscar Milosz, poet and mystic, the writer's beloved visionary uncle who, born in the forests of Lithuania, later chose France and the French language and became a minor classic of his second country. And here once more is the poet's wife, immortalized in a remarkable elegy called "Orpheus and Eurydice." And here, in a heartbreaking last appearance, is the poet himself, leaving the stage as Orpheus:

He sang the brightness of mornings
and green rivers,
He sang of smoking water in the
rose-colored daybreaks,
Of colors: cinnabar, carmine, burnt
sienna, blue,
Of the delight of swimming in the sea
under marble cliffs,
Of feasting on a terrace above the
tumult of a fishing port,
Of the tastes of wine, olive oil,
almonds, mustard, salt.
Of the flight of the swallow,
the falcon,
Of a dignified flock of pelicans above
a bay,
Of the scent of an armful of lilacs
in summer rain,
Of his having composed his words
always against death
And of having made no rhyme in
praise of nothingness. ■

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Joseph Frank
A Hero of His Time

MALRAUX: A LIFE
By Olivier Todd
Translated by Joseph West
(Alfred A. Knopf, 541 pp., $35)

THE NAME OF ANDRÉ MALraux is hardly likely to arouse turbulent responses anymore. But to those like myself, who grew up in the period between the two world wars, he was a genuinely heroic figure. He was, for a start, a brilliant and exciting writer, whose novels not only dramatized the social and economic conflicts of the time but also endowed them with tragic Dostoevskian dimensions. In addition, he was an active participant in the wars and the revolutions that he evoked so unforgettably. He was one of the leaders of French and worldwide opinion in the fight against fascism that took place in the 1930s after Hitler's rise to power. Not only did he write and speak publicly, he also organized a squadron of planes to fight against Franco in the Spanish Civil War, and then volunteered for service in the French Army at the outbreak of World War II. Taken prisoner, he escaped and openly joined the French Resistance in 1944 as the German occupation of France was coming to a close.

Not since Byron went off to fight for Greek independence has any writer of such stature possessed a comparably irresistible aura of literary creativity and physical derring-do exerted on behalf of the highest moral and political causes. The excitement created by his presence on a platform was also irresistible, as I can testify from having heard Malraux speak in New York during a tour in 1937 to raise money for the Spanish Loyalists. Even though, like most of his audience, I could not then understand French, it was impossible not to be swept away by the dynamic intensity of the passion that he managed to communicate above and beyond the limitations of language.

During this early part of his career Malraux was continually associated with left-wing causes, and although he was never aligned officially with the French Communist Party, he was most definitely a prominent fellow traveler. At the end of World War II, however, when a struggle was going on between the French communists and those who had rallied behind General Charles de Gaulle, he joined the Gaullists. He became a close associate of the general, who had refused to follow so many others in surrendering to the Germans and accepting the infamously subservient Vichy government. This alliance with the French right wing, though de Gaulle was hardly a die-hard reactionary, led to furious attacks on Malraux by former admirers and sympathizers. This new biography, written by someone deeply involved in the internecine warfare of French literary politics, attempts to walk a very fine line between admiration and condemnation. Olivier Todd's balance is unfortunately not steady, and in my view he topples over far too often into the latter.

There is already a considerable literature on Malraux, but no one, so far as my knowledge goes, has explored the now-available documentation with as much assiduity as Todd. There is a page and a half in small print of the names of all the people whom he interviewed; and he has gone through government archives in France, India, Spain, and Moscow (the latter containing much non-Russian material). "I am also indebted," he writes, "to the CIA, which showed me the file on Malraux, in part, but refused to show me mine." One of Todd's aims is to dissipate "the myth of Malraux," constructed in part of statements the writer made about himself and in part of statements made by others that he left uncorrected.

Malraux's tendency to magnify himself in various ways, and not to object when others did so, has long been known and noted; but his achievements are so many that most commentators do not dwell on his egotism with the same insistence and animosity as Todd, who calls him a mythomaniac and a liar. Indeed, Todd spends so much space documenting these charges, which often have little or nothing to do with anything of importance, that one cannot help suspecting some ulterior motive. In his introduction, he depicts himself as having once thought when young "that no better life or death could be imagined than with the members of the International Brigade," the volunteer regiments fighting with the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War. But such "contagious enthusiasm," he writes, is no longer appropriate, and one surmises that perhaps in carrying on a quarrel with his subject the biographer is also carrying on an internal quarrel with his own past. He seems to bear a personal grudge against Malraux, and finds it difficult to conceive of any motive except self-aggrandizement to explain Malraux's behavior. All this considerably diminishes the stature of his book, despite its scope and its usefulness as the fullest account to date of this truly extraordinary career.

MALRAUX LED AN INCREDIble life, certainly when compared with other members of the French literary establishment, but it began ordinarily enough. He was born in 1901 in a small suburban town just outside Paris. At an early age he began to read widely, to display a remarkable memory, and to manifest a taste for drawing that led ultimately to an ardent interest in the visual arts. He graduated from primary school, but although a reasonably good student, who by this time was steeped in writers such as Hugo, Dumas, and Michelet, he was refused admission to the prestigious Lycée Condorcet. As a result, he decided not to try for any higher academic accreditation and to strike out on his own. Thus Malraux was forced to fend for himself at the age of sixteen, and did so in a manner exhibiting the considerable erudition that he had already acquired.

Todd remarks on "the ease with which André comes and goes from the medieval Froissart to the nineteenth-century Leconte de Lisle, from Balzac and Flaubert to Malherbe and Montaigne." With this wide reading the young man became a *chineur*, someone who combs the bookstores and bookstalls for secondhand works whose value has been underestimated and then sells them to book dealers and collectors. Malraux thus very ear-

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ly acquired an expertise in such matters as binding, printing, paper quality, and so on, which later stood him in good stead as artistic director at Gallimard, the leading French publishing house.

He took his first literary steps with some brief articles in various avant-garde journals. In one, he dissociates himself from the French Symbolists, who were then also being attacked by Dadaists and Surrealists, but does not align himself with these latter movements. In another, he sharply criticized Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror*, a writer and a book idolized by those avant-garde movements. He also set himself up as an independent publisher, issuing works that were neglected or difficult to obtain, and in some cases pornographic, garnishing them with carefully chosen illustrations. By the age of eighteen, he was well known in publishing and literary circles in Paris.

WHEN HE WAS TWENTY, Malraux met Clara Goldschmidt, the daughter of a well-to-do German-Jewish family, branches of which also lived in France. Clara, who was multilingual, worked for a journal in which Malraux had published, and they soon married against the wishes of her family. The marriage was to be an open one in which they retained their freedom (Clara suggested divorce after six months); and though the broad-minded husband presumably agreed, he could never inwardly reconcile himself to being informed about her infidelities. There is a famous scene in *Man's Fate*, a confrontation between the communist figure Kyo Gisors and his German wife May, which has been thought by scholars to depict one such confession, and to dramatize the conflicting emotions that it aroused in the author. Yet they were a close-knit couple for many years, and had one daughter, Florence, who later married the film director Alain Resnais. Clara's cosmopolitan culture, particularly its German component, did much to increase the range of Malraux's already formidable erudition. Moreover, Clara's fortune allowed them to indulge the taste for travel that they shared, and they indefatigably explored the architectural and artistic riches of France, Italy, and Germany.

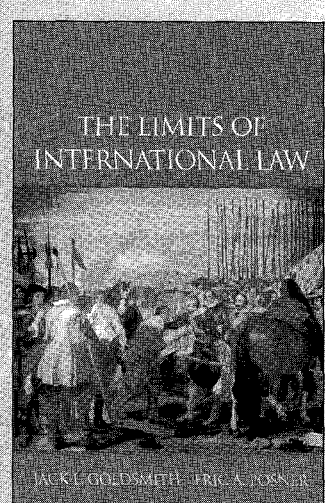
But their money evaporated in the postwar economic turmoil, and Malraux decided to recoup their fortunes by a bold stroke that displays both his connoisseurship and his taste for adventure. Already thinking of writing a history of art, he became acquainted with specialists on Asian art in Germany and France, and was particularly struck by an obscure article by a French expert about the beauties of Khmer sculpture in French Indochina. Specimens were worth a tidy sum, and he decided to organize a little expedition with Clara and a loyal friend to a temple falling into ruins, where he would acquire a few precious pieces.

To do so, he provided the authorities with a dossier containing recommendations from important specialists, in which he speaks of himself as having followed courses at the School of Oriental Languages (there is no evidence of this), and as pursuing researches in Khmer archaeology that he seeks permission to continue. Much of this documentation is more pretense than fact; but even though he lacked the qualifications that he claimed, he impressed specialists with his knowledge nonetheless. Once arrived in Cambodia, Malraux and his friend clumsily pried loose some excellent figures from a neglected temple and tried to send them out addressed to a chemical firm in Saigon. All three were arrested, and the two men were brought to trial.

Clara was allowed to return to France, feigning illness, but Malraux and his friend were submitted to a lengthy judicial process. Since they were not thrown into jail, as natives in their position would have been, they had time to stroll around Phnom Penh and Saigon and "soak up the reality of colonialism." This was Malraux's first moral and physical contact with imperialist actualities, as he walked from "the stone and brick villas of the rich and influential" to "the misery of the Cambodian working class in the poor areas, the stench of the alleyways." Clara was extremely active in rallying support for her husband among the literati in France, and a petition appeared in the *Nouvelles Littéraires* with extremely influential names. The two "archaeologists" were convicted with suspended sentences, and finally Malraux managed to return to France with some Khmer pieces probably bought from more adroit local pilferers.

Ten weeks after leaving Indochina, however, Malraux was on his way back, this time to edit a newspaper in Saigon with Paul Monin, one of the lawyers who had defended him, well known for his

CRUCIAL LEGAL ISSUES



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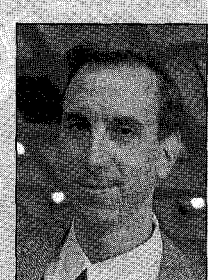
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opposition to the rampant inequalities of colonialism. He and Malraux succeeded in launching a newspaper called *L'Indochine*, which, after running into opposition from the reigning local authorities, became *L'Indochine Enchaînée*, or *Indochina in Chains*. Todd details the various underhand efforts to suppress the paper by interfering with subscriptions and sales and intimidating the native typographers, which finally drove it into the ground. In fact, the paper was not revolutionary but reformist, supporting the extension of rights to the native population, and pleading for aid to allow them to acquire a French education, and attempting to expose and remedy some of the rampant corruption and injustices carried out under the hypocritical cover of legality. "I say to all French people," Malraux wrote prophetically, "this terror rising from all parts of Hanoi's soil, this anguish, a repository for resentment and dispersed hate ... may, if you are not on your guard, become the field of a fearsome harvest."

During those two years in Indochina, Malraux was plunged heart and soul into the social unrest that was beginning to transform that part of the world—an unrest that had partisans in Indochina as well. His newspaper received financial support from Chinese expatriates allied with the nationalist Chinese Kuomintang. These experiences provided Malraux with the background that he would later use for novels such as *Les Conquérants* (*The Conquerors*) and *La Condition Humaine* (*Man's Fate*).

ON RETURNING TO FRANCE, Malraux again set himself up as a publisher of luxury books, but more importantly he published his first novel, *La Tentation de l'Occident* (*The Temptation of the Occident*). This book is quite different from any other novel that he would eventually write, and its sumptuous, ornate style is closer to his later works on art than to his fiction. It is an epistolary novel, an exchange of letters between two young men, a European traveling in Asia and a Chinese man visiting various European countries. One of Malraux's aims was to combat the fashionable thesis of Spengler, whose *Decline of the West* was then being much discussed, that civilizations are self-enclosed entities impenetrable to each other. Other themes are also broached in Malraux's first novel that anticipate the ideas of the existentialism of later years, and even of Foucault and Lacan. As Todd writes, "one idea running through the book, affirmed rather than demonstrated, is that [the] certified demise of God, seasoned with Nietzsche and Spengler, must bring about the spiritual and intellectual death of man." Another significant idea was that "the importance of the self" cultivated in the West all through the nineteenth century had ceased to exercise its force, and that the West was now searching for a new conception of man.

During the next several years Malraux was again active as a publisher and eventually became artistic director of Gallimard, also taking his place as the youngest member of the prestigious reading committee. But he was an inherently curious and restless personality, and he and Clara traveled to Turkey, Batum, Baku, Persia, and then Iraq and Syria, and once around the whole world, collecting works of art of all kinds and exhibiting them in a newly established Gallimard art gallery. But all this faded into insignificance when Malraux's next novel, *The Conquerors*, began to appear serially in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.

Here he draws on his Asiatic experiences in a direct and explicitly political manner, recounting a struggle that took place in China in 1925 between the communists and the Kuomintang as background. They were both allied against the English and wished to boycott trade with Hong Kong, but the communists desired to make the boycott much stricter than the nationalist Chinese. Some of the figures are historical, such as Borodine, the Russian sent by the Comintern; others, such as the central figure Garine (at first called Stavine, perhaps in an echo of Dostoevsky's Stavrogin), are entirely fictional. Todd calls it the "first good *roman engagé* of the decade," that is, a work in which the social and political conflicts of the period dominate the action. Written in an abrupt and nervous style, interspersed with accounts coming from the radio as well as police reports and constantly shifting from scene to scene, it was quite original in its construction, and broke with more conventional types of French narrative. Garine, a Swiss Frenchman working for the Bureau of Propaganda of the Kuomintang, is the figure who attracted the most attention, and he was almost immediately identified with his creator. Trotsky admired the book, writing that "by small colorful strokes, following the pointillist method, Malraux gives an unforgettable picture of the general strike," though he remarked also that Garine—and his creator—would have benefited from a lesson in Marxism.

THE *CONQUERORS* AROUSED A huge amount of interest, and was greeted as an important cultural event. A public discussion of the book was organized, presided over by the philosopher Léon Brunschvicg, in which Julien Benda and Gabriel Marcel also participated. "The whole thing," Todd writes, "amounts to a coronation." Garine was the center of the discussion. Though he is immersed in a social revolution, Garine is really a metaphysical rebel, closer to Dostoevsky than to Marx. "I do not take society to be bad nor capable of improvement; I hold it to be absurd," he declares. Todd comments: "To escape the absurd for the duration of the insurrection, Garine puts his faith in a brotherhood that evades him." This combination of revolutionary politics and a philosophical quest for the meaning of life proved an irresistible attraction to the novel's first readers.

It is quite clear, however, that politics cannot provide the answer to Garine's internal dilemma. When accused of despising the people for whom he is presumably fighting, Garine replies that he prefers them, "but only because they are the vanquished ... they have more heart, more humanity than the others; the virtues of the vanquished." He feels "nothing but loathing and disgust for the bourgeoisie from which I come," but if the vanquished became victorious, "I know only too well how abject they would become once we had triumphed together." Despite this last sentence, which shows that Malraux harbored no illusions about the results of the possible future triumph of "the people," Todd still accuses Malraux of belonging "to the age of the Good Poor, the proletariat as the vehicle of History," in this way following in the footsteps of Victor Hugo. The Russians knew better, since they banned the book (as did Mussolini's Italy), and Malraux's publisher made good use in its publicity of these interdictions.

The Conquerors placed Malraux in the first rank of contemporary French novelists, and his second novel, *La Voie royale* (*The Royal Way*), served to reinforce his literary stature by winning the Prix Interallié (but not the Goncourt, the most prestigious award of all). Abandon-

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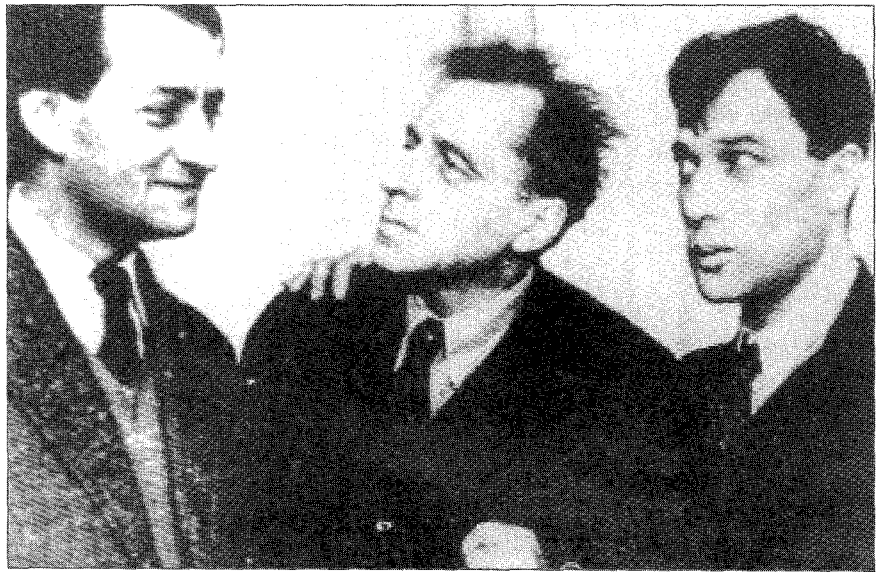
ing politics, but not the exoticism of an Indochinese background, Malraux's new novel dealt with a personal quest. The narrator Claude Vannec, like the young Malraux himself (though provided with more authentic qualifications for his aims), is searching for lost temples, and draws on the writer's earlier escapade. Another character named Perken, whom he meets on a boat, is a legendary adventurer who joins him for reasons of his own—one of which is to seek a companion who had vanished in the jungle. Eventually they find him as the prisoner of a hostile tribe in the mountains, blinded and chained to a millstone.

Once again Malraux endows this adventure story—quite reminiscent of *Heart of Darkness*, one of his favorite books—with a metaphysical dimension. For Claude realizes that Perken's fabulous exploits have all been efforts to provide his life, haunted by the prospect of death, with significance and meaning; and he comprehends that his own voyage of discovery has the same underlying motivation. At the end of the novel, with Perken dying from an infected wound, Claude rises to a truly Dostoevskian exhortation that God might exist so that "he could, at the price of eternal sufferings, howl, like those dogs, that no divine thought, no future recompense, could justify the end of a human existence." Malraux's jungle descriptions have become classic, and, as Todd points out with his usual jab, "have been extremely popular choices for university translation exams"; but they are much more than set pieces when regarded as part of Malraux's metaphysical vision.



COURTESY KNOPF

André Malraux with Vsevolod Meyerhold and Boris Pasternak, Moscow, 1934

MALRAUX'S MOST FAMOUS novel, *Man's Fate*, appeared in 1933. In this work he returns to revolutionary events in China a few years after those depicted in *The Conquerors*. He no longer focuses on one or two central figures, but instead portrays a whole range of brilliantly delineated characters. There is Kyo, "the young, virtuous Communist leader"; his father, old Gisors, "the disillusioned aesthete, 'conscience' embodied in an opium addict"; Kyo's wife May, a German doctor and Malraux's only important female character; the terrorist Tchen; the French capitalist Ferral, worried about his investments; and most of all the captivating, irresponsible, mythomaniacal Baron de Clappique, in whom Malraux could give fictional rein to his taste for the magically transforming capacity of the imaginative, or what he called *le farfelu*, a word that comes from Rabelais and means something like "kooky." (Some of the allegorical and fantastical sketches that Malraux had published during the 1920s were later collected as *Royaume farfelu*.)

The action is once again conveyed tellingly in a succession of short, sharp scenes, much closer to a film than a conventional novel. (Malraux spoke of a "literature of montage" to describe his own technique.) The atmosphere of tension-filled Shanghai is unforgettably evoked, and the scene in which the Comintern representative Katow gives his poison to two other captives while all are waiting to be thrown alive into the boiler of a locomotive is one of the few modern celebrations of self-sacrificing heroism that can be read without embarrassment. But Malraux is by no means hewing to a party line: it is Comintern policy, as he makes clear, that has delivered the Shanghai Communists to the Nationalists. All the same, Katow felt that "he had fought for that which, in his time, had been filled with the strongest meaning and the strongest hope." These are the feelings of a fictional character, not those of the author; but there is little doubt that Malraux could identify with such emotions at this time, whatever reservations he might have had otherwise. The novel won the coveted Goncourt Prize, and was so powerful that, as Todd remarks, even a rock-hard right-winger like Léon Daudet could not resist admitting that he was "enthralled by the beauty of the work."

MAN'S FATE WAS PUBLISHED in the year that Hitler came to power, and Malraux participated fervently in the anti-fascist agitation that began on a large scale in France at this time. A spellbinding orator, he frequently spoke at such meetings, and through Clara and others he met many refugees who became personal friends and provided first-hand accounts. This resulted in a short novel, *Le temps du mépris*, translated as *Days of Wrath*, which appeared in 1935. The central character is an imprisoned German communist, first arrested and then released, who returns to join the struggle. The book was well received, but it was written too hastily and was perhaps too overtly propagandistic for Malraux's own taste. (He refused to have it republished until 1951.) He was also, at this time, playing an increasingly prominent role in politics: he and Gide were appointed by a committee to travel to Berlin to demand the release of the Bulgarian communist Georges Dimitrov, acquitted of having participated in the Reichstag fire. They were to deliver a petition to Hitler, with Goebbels as second-best, but met neither and left after deposing their document. (Dimitrov was released a month later.)

Todd documents Malraux's intricate relations with the communist left during this period. He collaborated with them in their opposition to Nazism, but joined André Breton in protesting against Trot-

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sky's exile, and even talked to others about organizing an expedition to land in Alma Ata and rescue him. Trotsky's jailers, writes Todd sarcastically, "would (obviously) be mesmerized and paralyzed at the sight of a Goncourt laureate leading a literary commando unit." Similarly, while commending "the shrewdness of Malraux" in realizing very early that "Nazism is the danger of Europe," he laments that the left eye of Malraux and others like him "has a large blind spot that prevents them from seeing the totalitarian Soviets." This is very true, but one might also recall that no Soviet army at that time was a threat to any European country. When Trotsky came to France, Malraux went to visit him and protested along with others when the French government wanted him expelled.

Even if refractory, Malraux was too valuable a fellow traveler to be neglected or repulsed by the communists, who assigned Ilya Ehrenburg to cultivate his friendship. He was invited to a Writer's Congress in Russia in the spring of 1934 and received the full celebrity treatment, which was carefully designed to conceal from visitors the distressing truths about Soviet life. Malraux made flattering statements to his hosts for public consumption, perhaps half-believing them himself, but at the same time we find this passage in his journal: "At the zoo. The chimpanzee keeper, when asked, 'Does the monkey eat bread?' replies bitterly, 'Yes, but only the bread that's made for foreigners: not ours.'" At the Congress, Malraux became incensed at the attacks on Proust and Joyce, and refused to bow to the proclamation of the dogma of "socialist realism." Instead, he declared: "If writers are the engineers of the soul [as Stalin had said], do not forget that the highest function of an engineer is to invent.... Art is not a submission, it is a conquest." As Todd remarks, any Soviet citizen would have been imprisoned for this crime of "lèse-Stalin."

Two years later Malraux returned to the Soviet Union, praising the great possibilities of Soviet culture but saying little about its achievements (except in the cinema, in which he always had a special interest, and about which he later wrote *A Sketch of the Psychology of Cinema*). He met Eisenstein and Meyerhold, hoping to turn *Man's Fate* into a film with the former (for whom he wrote a scenario) or a drama for the latter; but neither project was ever realized. And soon art and culture receded into the background with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, during which Malraux played an important role.

The Strike

We set out for the mountains
since they had not been crippled
by the strike, people moving across
roadsides, chatting to neighbors.
For not lifting carrots out of fields,
was the government against us? No,
the government was on strike as well,
our prince opened his knapsack of
cheese and grapes to offer us a slice,
his announcer out with laryngitis
for the day. From across the sea
rumors came that other countries
were furious, that we had violated
our own sovereignty, that we should
be declassified as a principality,
their boats nudging prow to prow, bay
water flowing thickly between their
oars, and the city emptied, the plazas
empty, the only signs to direct
the invaders: "men, women."

TUNG-HUI HU

[redacted]

With the help of Jean Moulin, later a hero of the French Resistance and then assistant to the Air Minister Pierre Cot, Malraux became involved in circumventing the official French policy of neutrality and nonintervention. He bought aircraft for the legal Spanish government, recruited pilots, organized a squadron (though leaving the command to experienced airmen), and sometimes participated in combat as a gunner, reciting Racine and Corneille to pass the time. He returned to France occasionally to raise money, and also, as already mentioned, toured the United States. Todd refers to him all through this chapter rather snidely as *el coronel*, as if to stress a desire for rank and status, and he recounts the episode in which Malraux is asked whether Gide should publish his biting critique of the Soviet Union, *Back From the USSR*, just at this time. Since Russia was the only country officially aiding the Loyalists, though it was also carrying on its own relentless vendetta against Spanish anarchists and Socialists, Malraux concluded that "I think it would be better to put off this publication until the end of the war." About which Todd comments: "Sensible forethought to some, opportunism or follow the leader for others." Todd leaves the question open, but the imputation of motives such as "opportunism" or sheeplike acquiescence hardly jibes with the Malraux who was then opposing his own government and risking his own life.

Malraux's participation in the Spanish Civil War led to another novel, *L'Espoir* (*Man's Hope*), written while the war was still taking place and begun during his trip to the United States. Along with Jacques Chirac, whom he interviewed for his book, and André Gide, whom he cites, Todd considers this the best of Malraux's novels, and he writes about it with enthusiasm. It is a wide-ranging book with a large cast of characters, and deals with the first eight months of the war, ending on a note of hope with the battle of Guadalajara in the spring of 1937, which was a definite victory for the Loyalists. The action alternates between the Loyalist ground troops composed largely of civilians—many belonging to anarchist groups, who gradually learn how to fight the more disciplined regular armies of Franco and Mussolini—and the air force squadron of volunteers and mercenaries modeled on the one formed by Malraux.

At the center of the book is the conflict between politics and ethics, between the necessity of discipline and regimentation to fight a war successfully and the ideals of freedom and liberty for which one was presumably fighting. Malraux depicts this dilemma in the action of the book and in brilliant dialogues between various characters. Scali, an Italian member of Malraux's squadron with a philosophical bent, asks another character, an art historian, "whether an attack on the revolution by an intellectual who was a revolutionary [they are talking about Unamuno] does not always place in doubt the politics of revolution by ... its ethic, if you will. Seriously ... would you wish this critique not to be made?" The reply: "How could I wish it?" (Scali is at least partly based on the Italian intellectual Nicola Chiaromonte, a personal friend who sometimes reminisced about the days depicted in Malraux's novel.) If the search for personal dignity through revolution provided the leitmotif of earlier books, this is now combined in *Man's Hope* with an increased awareness of the

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tragically dialectical antinomy of ends and means.

Malraux's book was charged with Stalinism, and the accusation continues to linger because of its implicit anti-anarchist theme, as well as its failure to note the ruthless persecution of anarchists being carried on by the communists themselves. But the book is a still-unsurpassed dramatization of Malraux's tortured awareness of the dangers of the very course that he thought it necessary to pursue in order to fight the war. During its last days, in almost impossible conditions, he made a film called *Sierra de Teruel* that recounted the rescue by local peasants of the crew of one of the planes of his squadron shot down in the mountains. Todd cites enthusiastic remarks from those who saw it at the time, including Cocteau, and says that the episode of the descent from the mountains "is probably one of the finest war sequences ever made."

At the outbreak of World War II, Malraux insisted on joining the French army as a private, and was assigned to a tank regiment for training. Taken prisoner when the Germans broke through the French defenses in June 1940, he was brought with other prisoners to the cathedral of Sens, then to an improvised camp, and finally to a farm where he was put to work. When Malraux learned that his name had been broadcast on a list of writers the Germans were seeking, he decided to escape and did so quite easily, traveling to the south of France, unoccupied by the Germans for the time being, to join a pregnant mistress who had become a substitute wife. His relations with Clara had grown increasingly stormy, and the two had long been leading separate lives.

During the next two years Malraux lived quietly and worked on a novel, as well as on the books on art that he had intended to write ever since his early twenties. Always fascinated by T. E. Lawrence, to whom he felt a distinct affinity, he launched into an erudite biography of him called *Le Démon de l'absolu* (*The Demon of the Absolute*), the weighty manuscript of which was left unfinished at his death in 1976. Malraux's two half-brothers, Roland and Claude, were active in the French Resistance and kept him informed of its activities. But the experience of the Spanish War had left its mark, and he preferred to wait for what he was certain would be decisive action on the part of the Allies in the future.

One of the enigmas of this period, which reveals some of the complexity of the French cultural situation, was the continuation of Malraux's long-standing and close friendship with Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, a gifted writer and one of the most important Vichy collaborators, who had taken over the editorship of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. (He ultimately committed suicide.) Todd notes this anomaly but does nothing to analyze it, except to refer to the admiration of Josette Clotis, Malraux's companion, for Drieu. During these years she gave birth to two sons by Malraux, and Drieu became the godfather of the second. Drieu named Malraux his literary executor, and he performed his duties conscientiously after the war.

Malraux joined the French Resistance in the spring of 1944, after Roland was killed. (Claude was captured later and also died.) Todd stresses Malraux's desire immediately to take a leading role in a complex and politically disorganized situation. Claiming to have been appointed by a council of the Resistance located in Paris, though there is no evidence for any such entitlement, Malraux impressed enough leaders (one of them an important Army officer he had known before the war) to be accepted among them. His aim was to unify the competing groups, separated by clashing social and political ideologies. In July 1944, while traveling from one to another, he was caught, imprisoned, interrogated but not tortured, and freed when the Germans retreated. He then became the head of a group called the Alsace-Lorraine Brigade, which was accepted in the French Army and participated honorably in the Battle of the Bulge. Malraux's later account of all this in his *Anti-Memoirs* is filled with factual errors and probable exaggerations (one is never certain), which Todd tracks down relentlessly. But he is also fair enough to note that Malraux's men "admire their colonel," and that "in his tight, fur-lined jacket, topped off with a beret, he seems to know no fear," constantly walking on the front lines and sometimes even in advance of them.

Malraux's next novel, the too-little-read *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg* (*The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*), draws on his initial captivity in 1940 (it begins with the French prisoners gathered around the Sens cathedral) and also on his fascination with Lawrence. The father of the narrator is involved in attempting to organize a united Turkish empire throughout Central Asia, as Lawrence had done with the Arabs. But the deeper theme is once again the nature of the human condition, which here becomes separated from any political association. Malraux is now searching for "the fundamental" in man, and he finds it among the prisoners desperately scrawling their letters home even though they may never be delivered. He finds it in a hotly disputed discussion among the cream of the European intelligentsia (worthy of the best pages of Thomas Mann) in which "the humanization of the world" by art is seen as one of man's answers to the fatality of destiny. He also finds it in the hallucinatory scene of one of the earliest German attacks of poison gas, in which the horrified German soldiers return bearing the gasping and dying Russian soldiers on their shoulders. And this "humanization of the world" also occurs when the narrator, awaiting death in a tank-trap all night, disengages himself in the morning and stumbles on a helpless old peasant woman "harmonized with the cosmos like a stone," who "smiles a slow, pensive smile" and "seems to be viewing death at a distance and even—oh mysterious blink, sharp shadow at the corner of the eyelids!—even with irony." Few modern novels equal the intellectual loftiness and the intense humanity of such pages.

At the end of the war Malraux rallied to the cause of de Gaulle, making a famous speech in 1945 that prevented the communists from taking control of the French Resistance movement. Todd copiously chronicles what appeared to many as an unexpected shift of alliances, but he does little to interpret it. A passage in *The Conquerors* that seems to have gone unnoticed may be helpful in this context. The narrator remarks that

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while the propaganda of Borodine, couched in Marxist class terms, had little appeal to the Chinese rank and file, "the nationalist propaganda, that of Garine, [gave them] the possibility of believing in their own dignity." Malraux may now have felt much the same, and in any case he took his stand against the communists, thus leading to his furious castigation by many previous left-wing admirers.

He became minister of information in the first de Gaulle government, but this lasted only one year, and he resumed his post at Gallimard while working on his books on art. Todd devotes a chapter to them, *Les Voix du silence* (*The Voices of Silence*) and the others that followed, including those that Malraux edited and commissioned. He seems rather surprised that he cannot completely agree with the art historians—he mentions E.H. Gombrich and Georges Duthuit—who picked them to pieces. Gombrich's review in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1954 was particularly damaging, not least because of his great reputation; but no mention is made of his later compliment to Malraux as a precursor of his own thinking in *Art and Illusion*.

Specialists have never had any trouble ripping apart ambitious works of synthesis in their field, as the great classicist Wilamowitz did irrefutably with Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*; but such criticisms have rarely succeeded in destroying the power of a new vision of the subject. Malraux sees the entire history of art as part of "the humanization of the world," as a sublime expression of man's answer to destiny; and even though, as Todd writes, his "formulae are not what logicians of the Vienna Circle would call propositions, they do often carry along suggestions of an imaginative and stimulating nature." (Why should his formulations be expected to conform to the arid and unliterary standards of the logical positivists?) So stimulating, indeed, that if we turn to the footnotes at the back of the book, we find the names of two eminent French art historians (one of them became director of the Louvre) whose youthful readings of Malraux set them on the path of their careers.

After 1945, Todd deals both with Malraux's private life, which was shadowed by misfortune (his two sons were killed in an auto accident), and his public career after de Gaulle returned to office in 1958 with Malraux as his minister of cultural affairs. For an American reader unfamiliar with the complicated history of France during these years of the Algerian uprising and the mini-revolution of 1968, Todd's chapters are apt to prove more confusing than enlightening. Malraux, who always considered himself a "left-wing Gaullist," exerted himself to bring French culture to the people by establishing *maisons de la culture*, in which movies and books were available to everyone, plays were performed, and art exhibitions were organized. He also presided, incidentally, over the cleaning of the façades of important buildings and set aside parts of historic towns as properties of the state, which protected them from becoming the prey of real-estate speculators. Bypassing more conventional artists, Malraux consigned the painting of the ceiling of the Paris Opéra to Marc Chagall and of the Odéon Theater to André Masson, and he appointed Balthus to be head of the French Academy in Rome.

As a sort of roving cultural ambassador Malraux traveled all over the world, dazzling everyone with the elevated eloquence of his speeches, and astonishing, bewildering, and sometimes enraging the French diplomats routinely assigned to these various countries. He took no account of established protocol, and Todd quotes abundantly from the files of queries and complaints sent back to Paris by outraged diplomatic officials. They never knew what might occur—as when, on a trip to the United States sponsored by Jacqueline Kennedy, who had actually read him and could speak French, he was asked whether France would be willing to lend the *Mona Lisa*, and he said yes, to the horror of the museum authorities in France and to the detriment of the French budget. But Malraux also arranged for prestigious exhibitions of art in Paris, including one on Indian art intended to manifest the universal receptivity of French culture.

Todd interviewed Malraux twice in October 1975. He asked him how he would like to be considered in the future, as "writer, publisher, revolutionary, politician, [or] art critic." Malraux answered: "It'd have to be 'writer.' One can imagine Gide: 'Writer, alas!' But I don't accept the 'alas' or the exclamation point." Of the many lives that Malraux led, it is as a writer that he wished to be remembered by posterity; and we can thus more or less neglect here the fascinating image of the politician (not at all "revolutionary" any longer, but by no means hidebound) that Todd offers us so profusely.

The nervous and physical tension under which Malraux always lived led to a breakdown in 1965, and this resulted in a quasi-diplomatic voyage, embarked on as a means of recovery, to many places that he had known in the past. The consequence of these travels was a new burst of literary activity in the 1970s, including the *Anti-Memoirs* and a series of smaller works, including one on de Gaulle, an account of Malraux's recovery from a collapse, and studies of Picasso, Mao Tse-tung, and lesser-known figures. These were all semi-autobiographical texts—some of them presumably reports of conversations, as with de Gaulle—but in which verisimilitude was hardly respected. In the *Anti-Memoirs*, Malraux includes everything he knew, had known, had thought, or later learned about everyone or every issue he wrote about, and also included rewritten parts of *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*. Todd has a field day finding inaccuracies and implausibilites, but for anyone interested in Malraux these later and obliquely revealing works are enthralling.

Many years ago, in an essay on *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*, I tried to define Malraux's position in French literature in relation to writers such as Sartre and Camus. Both of those figures had recognized him as a precursor (Camus, on receiving the Nobel Prize, said that it should have gone to Malraux), but there seemed to me an essential difference between them. All three could be considered existentialists, but the postwar writers had taken Kierkegaard and Heidegger as their guide, while Malraux, despite Nietzsche and Dostoevsky, could be said to have aspired to what might be called an existentialism of the Enlightenment—the Kantian ideal of "the sublime," which consisted in man's consciousness of the inability of the power of nature ever to force him to surrender his humanity. This remains, I think, a good way of defining a writer whose personal defects, whatever they may have been, were far outweighed by the depth of his commitment to social justice and political liberty, and the astonishing multiplicity of his attainments, and the undiminished power of his creations. ■

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CORRESPONDENCE

Continued from page 4

in science is like using humidity—rather than gravity—to explain the trajectory of a fastball. Concentrating on minor effects over major ones obfuscates the real issues that universities can address.

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STEVEN PINKER RESPONDS:
Alice C. Gibb's remarks about the biology of sex differences are indeed no big deal to many younger feminists. But, as I documented in *The Blank Slate* and have seen firsthand at Harvard, they would get her vilified as a biological determinist and a benighted Friend of Larry by many academics and pundits today. Gibb reasonably questions whether differences in spatial and mathematical reasoning are the "primary" reason women are underrepresented in physics and mathematics. But her example fails to show that discrimination is the primary reason instead. Zoology students and physics professors face very different demands, including mathematical problem-solving, interest in abstractions versus living things, and submission to draconian professional demands. And the happy increase in women's participation in science does not disprove innate sex differences unless one thinks of nature and nurture as a dichotomy. When cultures that systematically malnourished their daughters eliminated this injustice, they reduced, but did not eliminate, the sex difference in height.

Lytton and Romney found a "fairly modest" effect of encouragement of sex-typed activities like playing with dolls, but they cited studies showing that the parents were encouraging their children to do what they wanted to do in the first place. In any case, this is of questionable relevance to a career in science compared with their categories "Encourage Achievement: General" and "Encourage Achievement: Mathematics," which showed no sex difference. Alycia J. Weinberger's observation that women are more likely to drop out of scientific careers does not prove that innate differences are irrelevant, since such differences may include the trade-off between chasing status and being a good parent. Nor are the effects of sex differences always "minor." Even small differences in mean and variance can translate to large differences at the tails of the distribution, as we see in Camilla Benbow's finding that, in a sample of talented youth, the ratio of boys to girls scoring over 700 in the math SAT was 13 to one. None of this calls into question the existence of the kind of personal and institutional biases noted by all three correspondents.

NEHRU YOU MIND

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM HAS WRITten a thoughtful review of two books about Jawaharlal Nehru by Shashi Tharoor and Judith M. Brown ("The Founder," February 14). But I have a few small caveats. Nehru formed a powerful emotional tie to Mahatma Gandhi around 1919 that endured for nearly 30 years, until Gandhi's assassination. Although Nussbaum tells us that Nehru was a pragmatist and not all that committed to Gandhi's principles and program, Nehru bowed to Gandhi's will on numerous occasions. One has only to compare Nehru's continual siding with Gandhi against the frequent criticism and opposition of Nehru's younger colleague, Subhas Chandra Bose, to see this. Nehru never backed violence, while Bose cooperated with Axis powers in World War II in trying to drive the British from India by force.

Nussbaum suggests that Gandhi was softer on the Japanese in the 1930s and 1940s than Nehru, but Gandhi criticized the Japanese throughout for behaving like Western imperialists. He admired their standing up to the West, but opposed their actions in World War II, writing in an essay called "To Every Japanese" that, despite a fondness for Japan, "I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and, if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land." Also, Nussbaum does not name any good biography of Nehru, so let me do so. *Nehru, A Political Biography* is still the most compelling biography, even though it was written in 1959, while Nehru was still alive and while the author, Michael Brecher, lacked access to some of the papers that later biographers have had. Oxford University Press has recently reprinted the unabridged edition.

LEONARD A. GORDON
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New York, New York

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM RESPONDS:
I am grateful to Leonard A. Gordon for his helpful letter. Of course Nehru had the deepest admiration and affection for Gandhi, and he wholly agreed with the idea that morality must take precedence over expediency. But he often expressed doubts, both about nonviolence (which he considered an obsession that could distract people from the central issue of Indian independence) and especially about Gandhi's rejection of modernity, which, in Nehru's view, consigned the poor of India to misery. "He is an extraordinary paradox," Nehru writes. "For years I have puzzled over this problem: why with all his love and solicitude for the underdog he yet supports a system [meaning the quasi-feudal system of land tenure] which is wholly based on violence and coercion." And, in a 1945 letter, he writes to Gandhi, "I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and nonviolence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent." Here one sees the sharp contrast between Nehru's common sense and Gandhi's religious idealism. Perhaps the best summary is in a letter Nehru wrote to Indira Gandhi from prison, asking her to discuss her impending marriage with Gandhi: "[Gandhi] ... is one of the wisest men I know. He understands and appreciates the other's viewpoint and his advice is always valuable, even if we cannot always follow it." As for the Japanese, Gordon is right that Gandhi was not uncritical; but he and Nehru differed, at least initially, about what India's reaction should be to a Japanese invasion. Nehru told associates that he feared Gandhi's more conciliatory approach would make them into "passive partners of the Axis powers." In an earlier draft of my article, I recommended as the best Nehru biography the three-volume work by S. Gopal; that sentence was cut in editing. Finally, I should like to correct an error in my article: Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, not 1905. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Fool's Gold

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT Ari Fleischer is a duplicitous genius. During his tenure as White House press secretary, he elevated the mundane practice of misleading reporters and avoiding their questions into an art form. There was the vast array of topics he declared off-limits. These included questions about foreign countries ("You'd have to ask Pakistan") and questions about domestic concerns for which some other executive department could be said to be responsible ("I would refer you to the Department of Justice"). Precluded topics also included speculation about things that hadn't happened yet, rehashing things that had already happened and that the president was looking past, and questions about things that were happening right at the moment. His face never betrayed even the wildest prevarications. Every word that escaped his mouth was delivered in the same bland, bored tone, like a middle-school teacher explaining cell division to a class of particularly dim students.

I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY WHAT I EXPECTED from Fleischer's new book, *Taking Heat*. I hoped it would offer some insight into the mind of a brilliant con man. At the very least, I figured it would be interesting as propaganda. But it was maddeningly dull propaganda, mainly operating at a sub-ideological level. The Bush White House, in his telling, isn't deeply moral so much as it's just swell. Imagine that a devoted young Republican somewhere won a free trip to Washington, D.C., to spend a day inside the White House. Fleischer's book is the sort of memoir he would produce. "I ate in a small, private dining room, a mess within the White House mess that was reserved for top staff and members of the President's cabinet. It was wonderful and exciting," he writes. President Bush "stressed building a team where everyone worked well together." Fleischer seems to get most excited about baseball. He pals around with actual Major League Baseball players on multiple occasions, and even gets to play catch with Bush. ("What a great moment. What an enjoyable evening.") *This* is the mastermind I had held in such awe?

WHILE I WAS SLOGGING THROUGH THE book, I happened to be e-mailing with a conservative I know. My correspondent thought my Ari-as-virtuoso theory was silly: "When Ari worked on the Hill he was widely considered to be a moron even by other press secretaries, who are mostly a bunch of ignorant dolts themselves." But how, I asked, could he have run circles around the Washington press corps? "Ari is a genius like the [Peter] Sellers character in *Being There*," he replied. "He was too stupid and too ignorant to know he was telling lies."

IN LIGHT OF THIS NOVEL INTERPRETATION, I revisited the transcript of what I considered to be Fleischer's most masterful press conference. It took place in February 2001. A bipartisan group of congressmen, led by GOP Representative Charlie Norwood, was preparing to announce their support for a patients' bill of rights. But, before they could make the announcement, Bush persuaded Norwood to renounce the bill, which, until that point, had been the centerpiece of his legislative career. Norwood's defection killed the bill's chances. And, since Bush had promised to promote bipartisanship in general and support the patients' bill of rights in particular, his move to tear apart a bipartisan coalition behind the bill needed a bit of explaining. Fleischer coolly made it all seem normal:

> Fleischer: We emphasized to the congressman [Norwood] as well as to others that the president deserves his chance to put forward a patients' bill of rights that is going to be strong and bipartisan, and we expressed to the congressman our desire to work with him on it; and he was pleased to work with us on it.

So, where the assembled press was expecting Fleischer to explain why Bush had tried to kill Norwood's bill, Fleischer was acting as though Bush had somehow helped it along:

> *Q:* I have a hard time, though, telling any difference between what was proposed today [by Norwood's former allies] and the principles laid out by the president. Can you give me a couple of examples of where there's any light between the two proposals? It seems like something he would embrace right off the bat.
> *Fleischer:* And I think that's an encouraging sign. I think that we are very hopeful that this year will finally be the year that we can enact a patients' bill of rights into law.
> *Q:* On this bill specifically—does he support it, and, if not, what are the differences between them—
> *Fleischer:* Well, we're going to wait to see—
> *Q:* —the principles he outlined and what was outlined today?
> *Fleischer:* We're going to wait to see the specifics of the bill, as they are drawn up, as we would with any legislation on the Hill, patients' bill of rights or otherwise. So we will take a look at that. But the president is very concerned about getting a patients' bill of rights done and enacted into law this year, as there are a number of people, Republican and Democrat.

The press conference went on in this vein, with reporters trying to find out Bush's rationale for derailing the bill and Fleischer residing in an alternate universe in which Bush had done precisely the opposite. When I first saw it, I thought it was a tour de force of propaganda—a master dissembler effortlessly running circles around his bewildered and overmatched adversaries. But it's also consistent with the Chauncey Gardiner hypothesis. Perhaps Fleischer was simply spouting legislative jargon in a random, nonsensical fashion—foiling logical queries by utterly failing to grasp them. It's impossible to tell. Earlier this month, a radio host suggested to Fleischer, with an ironic wink, "that there is a difference between answering a question from a reporter and responding to a question from a reporter." Fleischer's reply, in its entirety: "Well, I guess I'm not sure what that distinction is." It's possible Fleischer was refusing to allow any ironic distance to come between himself and his old role. Or maybe he really didn't understand the distinction. If I ever found out he wasn't lying, I'd be so disillusioned.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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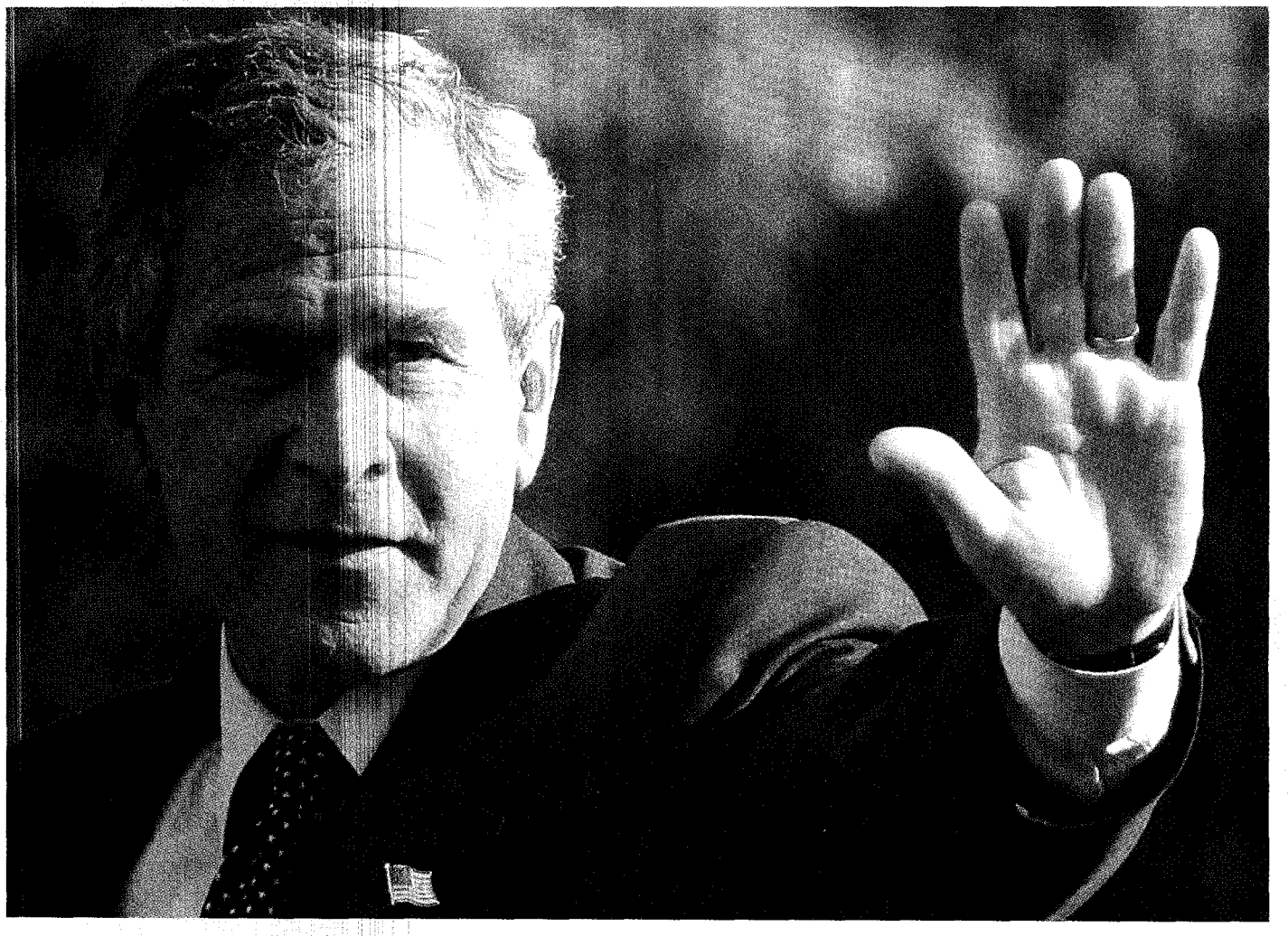

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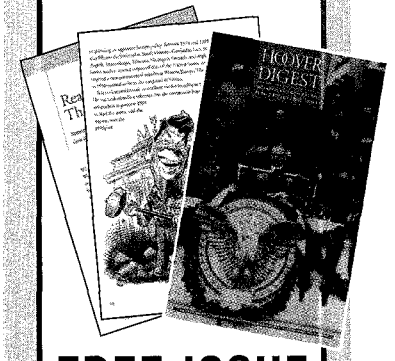

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In the current debate on Social Security reform, President Bush has refused to rule out a tax increase on those who earn more than $90,000 a year. That's the current maximum earned income on which Americans pay Social Security (FICA) taxes. Republican senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina has suggested making all earned income up to $200,000 taxable. Such a tax is a bad idea. There is not only a strong economic case against it but also a strong moral one.

First, the economics. Increasing the amount of taxed income would massively raise marginal tax rates for many of the most productive people. The marginal tax rate on those whose income is between $90,000 and $200,000 would increase by 6.2 percentage points for employees and by a whopping 12.4 percentage points for the self-employed. (Part of the 6.2 points paid by the employer would be borne by the employee, but that's a longer story.) Most people with earned income between $90,000 and $200,000 face a marginal tax rate of 31 to 40.5 percent. They are in a 25 to 33 percent federal income tax bracket. Their state tax bracket, adjusted for the deductibility of state taxes on their federal tax form, is about 4.5 to 6 percent. They also pay a 1.45 percent Medicare tax (2.9 percent for the self-employed) on all earnings. Thus **raising the cap would increase taxes on those affected by up to one fifth of their current marginal tax rate**.

A salaried worker making $200,000 a year would pay $6,820 more in taxes every year, whereas a self-employed worker would pay $13,640 more. This would be the biggest tax increase on high-income people since President Clinton's and, for many people, would be a bigger tax increase than Clinton's. A rise in marginal tax rates would discourage work. The person previously in the 40.5 percent bracket would keep only 53.3 cents of an additional dollar earned, down from 59.5 cents before the tax increase. People would also find ways of being paid other than by taxable income, such as by receiving a company car.

Second, the morality. **A tax increase on people who already get a lousy deal from Social Security is wrong.** Presumably, benefits for higher-income taxpayers would not rise in line with taxes. Otherwise, why raise the tax in the first place? The purpose of the tax is to generate more revenue to solve the long-term funding problem, which would not occur if the government raised Social Security benefits dollar for dollar. Furthermore, even if Bush planned to raise benefits, that's little comfort. Many people are happy to save their own money for retirement. Currently, a few million Americans can look forward every year to reaching the existing threshold ($90,000 in 2005) and knowing that the feds will keep their FICA hands off any additional income. We should be free to save that money or spend it as we wish. What a tragedy it would be if a president who believes in the "ownership society" ended up further violating citizens' rights to their own income.

—David R. Henderson

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